PZ 3
.B764
My3
COPY 1

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. PZ 3 Copyright No.

Shelf .B764My
3

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

FICTION · SCIENCE · RELIGION

# LOVELL'S LIBRARY

A TRI-WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE BEST CURRENT & STANDARD LITERATURE

Vol. 17. No. 850. Jan. 31, 1887. Annual Subscription, $30.00.

# MY HERO

BY

MRS. FORRESTER

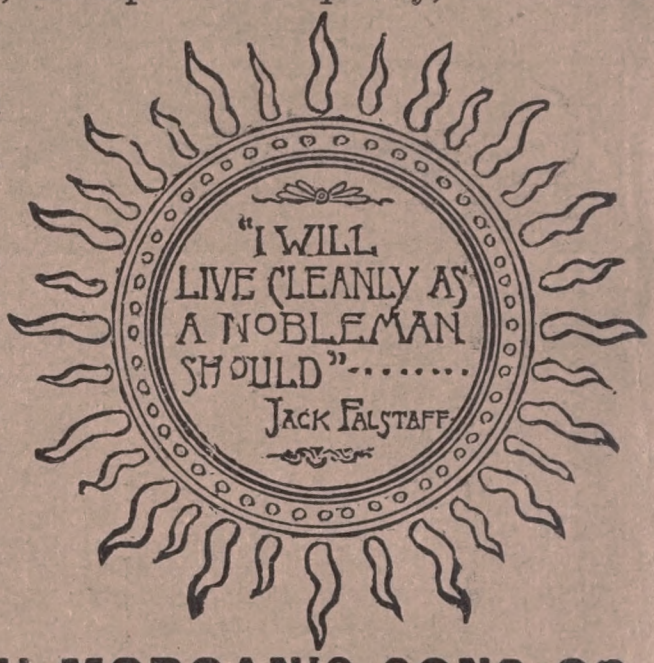
AUTHOR OF "FAIR WOMEN," "ONCE AGAIN," ETC., ETC.

Entered at the Post Office, N Y., as second-class matter.
Copyright, 1884, by JOHN W. LOVELL CO.

NEW-YORK
JOHN · W · LOVELL · COMPANY
14 & 16 VESEY STREET

**Know All Women** BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT while sundry and almost countless imitations of and substitutes for Enoch Morgan's Sons Sapolio are offered by unscrupulous parties, who do not hesitate to represent them as the original article,

**This Indenture** WITNESSETH, THAT there is but one Sapolio, to wit :—the original article manufactured by the Enoch Morgan's Sons Co., of New York, unsurpassed in quality, unexcelled in popularity, and widely known not only through its own merits, but through the many original modes which have been adopted to introduce it to the attention of the public. Imitation is the sincerest flattery. Cheapness is a poor proof of quality. Cheap imitations are doubly doubtful. The most critical communities are the most liberal purchasers of Sapolio which they invariably find to be worth the price they pay for it.




IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we hereby affix a great seal and our corporate title.

**ENOCH MORGAN'S SONS CO.**

---

# Tid-Bits

*The best humorous and literary weekly published. Fully illustrated.*

**Annual Subscription, $2.50. Single Copies, 5 Cents.**

FOR SALE BY ALL NEWSDEALERS.

**JOHN W. LOVELL CO., Publishers, 14 & 16 Vesey St., N. Y.**

---

# POND'S

## The Wonder of Healing!

**For PILES, BURNS, NEURALGIA, DIARRHŒA, STINGS, SORE THROAT, EYES, FEET, INFLAMMATIONS AND HEMORRHAGES OF ALL KINDS.**

Used Internally and Externally.

**POND'S EXTRACT CO., 76 5th Ave., New York.**

# EXTRACT.

**CAUTION.—See that the words "POND'S EXTRACT" are blown in each bottle, inclosed in a buff-colored wrapper, bearing our landscape trade-mark—none other is genuine.**

*Sold everywhere.*

**Price, 50c., $1, $1.75.**

**POND'S EXTRACT CO., 76 5th Ave., New York.**

# DR. SCOTT'S
# ELECTRIC CORSETS AND BELTS.

**Corsets, $1.00, $1.50, $2.00, $3.00. Belts, $3.00. Nursing Corset, Price, $1.50. Abdominal Corset, Price, $3.00.**

**Seventeen thousand families in the City of New York alone are now wearing them daily. Every Man and Women, well or ill, should daily wear either the Corset or Belt.**

**OUR CORSETS ARE DOUBLE STITCHED AND WILL NOT RIP.**

If you have *any* pain, ache, or ill-feeling from any cause, if you seem "pretty well," yet lack energy and do not "feel up to the mark," if you suffer from disease, we beg you to at once try these remarkable curatives. They cannot and do not injure like medicine. Always doing good, never harm. There is no shock or sensation felt in wearing them. *Every mail brings us testimonials like the following:*

THE CELEBRATED DR. W. A. HAMMOND, of New York, formerly Surgeon-General of the U. S. Army, lately lectured upon this subject, and advised all medical men to make trial of these agencies, describing at the same time most remarkable cures he had made, even in cases which would seem hopeless.

The Corsets do not differ in appearance from those usually worn. They are elegant in shape and finish, made after the best French pattern, and warranted satisfactory in every respect. Our Belts for both gents and ladies are the genuine Dr. Scott's and are reliable.

The prices are as follows: $1, $1.50, $2 and $3 for the Corsets, and $3 each for the Belts. The accompanying cut represents our No. 2, or $1.50 Corset. We have also a beautiful French shaped Sateen Corset at $3, also a fine Sateen Abdominal Corset at $3, and a short Sateen Corset at $2. The $1 and $1.50 goods are made of fine Jean, elegant in shape, strong and durable. Nursing Corsets, $1.50; Misses, 75c. All are double stitched. Gents' and Ladies' Belts, $3 each; Ladies' Abdominal Supporter, an invaluable article, $12. They are sent out in a handsome box, accompanied by a silver-plated compass by which the Electro-Magnetic influence can be tested. If you cannot find them in your dry goods store, remit to us direct. We will send either kind to any address, post-paid, on receipt of price, with 20 cents added for packing and postage.

We guarantee safe delivery into your hands. Remit in Post-Office Money-order, Draft, Check, or in Currency by Registered Letter at our risk. In ordering kindly mention *Lovell's Library*, and state exact size of corset usually worn. Make all remittances payable to GEO. A. SCOTT, 842 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

N. B.—Each article is stamped with the English coat-of-arms, and the name of the Proprietors, THE PALL MALL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION.

---

Hollis Centre, Me.
I suffered severely from back trouble for years and found no relief till I wore Dr. Scott's Electric Corsets. They cured me, and I would not be without them. MRS. H. D. BENSON.

---

Memphis, Tennessee.
Dr. Scott's Electric Corsets have given me much relief. I suffered four years with breast trouble, without finding any benefit from other remedies. They are invaluable.
MRS. JAS. CAMPBELL.

---

De Witt, N. Y.
I have an invalid sister who had not been dressed for a year. She has worn Dr. Scott's Electric Corsets for two weeks, and is now able to be dressed and sit up most of the time.
MELVA J. DOE.

---

Chambersburg, Pa.
I found Dr. Scott's Electric Corsets possessed miraculous power in stimulating and invigorating my enfeebled body, and the Hair Brush had a magic effect on my scalp. MRS. T. E. SNYDER,
Fancy Goods Dealer.

---

Newark, N. Y.
Dr. Scott's Electric Corsets have entirely cured me of muscular rheumatism, and also of severe case of headache.
MRS. L. C. SPENCER.

**Dr. Scott's Electric Hair Brushes, $1.00, $1.50, $2.00, $2.50, $3.00; Flesh Brushes, $3.00; Dr. Scott's Electric Tooth Brushes, 50 cents; Insoles, 50 cents; CHEST PROCTECTOR, $3.00; ELECTRIC HAIR CURLER, 50 cents; LUNG AND NERVE INVIGORATORS, $5.00 and $10.00.**

**A GREAT SUCCESS** ☞ **A Good Live Canvassing Agent WANTED in your town for these splendidly advertised and best selling goods in the market. LIBERAL PAY, QUICK SALES. Satisfaction guaranteed. Apply at once. GEO. A. SCOTT, 842 Broadway, N. Y.**

## ABANDON PHYSIC!

# GLUTEN SUPPOSITORIES

**Cure Constipation and Piles!**

DR. A. W. THOMPSON, Northampton, Mass., says: "I have tested the Gluten Suppositories, and consider them valuable, as indeed, I expected from the excellence of their theory."

DR. WM. TOD HELMUTH declares the Gluten Suppositories to be "the best remedy for constipation which I have ever prescribed."

"As Sancho Panza said of sleep, so I say of your Gluten Suppositories: God bless the man who invented them!"—E. L. RIPLEY, Burlington, Vt.

***50 Cents by Mail. Circulars Free.***

**HEALTH FOOD CO., 4th Avenue and 10th St., N. Y.**

---

# THE BEST UTTERANCE

— ON THE —

# LABOR QUESTION.

---

*"Solutions Sociales," translated by Marie Howland.*

---

"SOCIAL SOLUTIONS," a semi-monthly pamphlet, containing each a twelfth part of an admirable English translation of M. Godin's statement of the course of study which led him to conceive the Social Palace at Guise, France. There is no question that this publication makes an era in the growth of the labor question. It should serve as the manual for organized labor in its present contest, since its teachings will as surely lead to the destruction of the wages system as the abolition movement lead to that of chattel slavery. Each number contains articles of importance, besides the portion of the translation. Many of these are translated from M. Godin's contributions to the socialistic propaganda in Europe.

Published as regular issues of the "LOVELL LIBRARY," by the John W. Lovell Company, 14 and 16 Vesey Street, New York, N. Y., at ten cents per number; the subscription of $1.00 secures the delivery of the complete series.

---

**JOHN W. LOVELL COMPANY,**

***14 and 16 Vesey Street, NEW YORK.***

# MY HERO

BY

MRS. FORRESTER

AUTHOR OF "FAIR WOMEN," "ONCE AGAIN," "MY LORD AND MY LADY," ETC., ETC.

Mrs. Colonel Bridges.

40

NEW YORK

JOHN W. LOVELL COMPANY

14 AND 16 VESEY STREET

(1887)

PZ3
.B764My
3

# MRS. FORRESTER'S WORKS

CONTAINED IN LOVELL'S LIBRARY.

| NO. | | PRICE. |
|---|---|---|
| 760 | Fair Women, | 20c. |
| 818 | Once Again, | 20c. |
| 843 | My Lord and My Lady, | 20c. |
| 844 | Dolores, | 20c. |
| 845 | I Have Lived and Loved, | 20c. |
| 850 | My Hero, | 20c. |
| 859 | Viva, | 20c. |
| 860 | Omnia Vanitas, | 10c. |
| 861 | Diana Carew, | 20c. |
| 862 | From Olympus to Hades, | 20c. |
| 863 | Rhona, | 20c. |
| 864 | Roy and Viola, | 20c. |
| 865 | June, | 20c. |
| 866 | Mignon, | 20c. |
| 867 | A Young Man's Fancy, | 20c. |

# MY HERO.

## BY MRS. FORRESTER.

### CHAPTER I.

#### IN THE SOUTHCOTE WOODS.

"In the mute summer afternoon
They trembled to some undertune
Of music in the silver air;
Great pleasure was it to be there
Till green turned duskier, and the moon
Colored the cornsheaves like golden hair
* * * * * *
But some three hours before the moon
The air, still eager from the noon,
Flagged after heat, not wholly dead;
Against the stem I leant my head;
The color soothed me like a tune,
Green leaves all round the gold and red."

IT is the twentieth of July—my birthday—a day when the sky is one cloudless sheet of azure, and the sun shines down with an intensity that promises to ripen the backward corn in a day from golden yellow to harvest brown; a heavenly day in theory, practically a torment to the flesh—a day that makes one's soul long after the water-brooks, and one's mind revert with tender longing to a trout stream shadowed by ancient trees such as one wots of. In short, a day when one is unbearably hot and unquenchably thirsty, and, being a believer in the transmigration of souls, would like to travel backward, and enter into the body of yon patient cow, wading knee-deep in the delicious pond, sheltered by a spreading elm.

The twentieth of July, and I am seventeen—sweet seventeen. Why sweet, I wonder? To my thinking, the most awkward of ages, when, having still a child's tastes and feelings, one is nevertheless expected to possess the discretion of a woman; when one, still hankering after a game of romps, tears one's gown therein incontinently; when one is the subject of frequent snubs; when a word brings the tears to one's eyes, a look the blush to one's cheeks; when one has no tact, no *savoir faire*, no power of self-control or command, and is altogether the plaything of circumstance; like thistledown, blown hither and thither by every

breath of wind. Why not rather sweet twenty-five? Then one is mistress of oneself, of all the world, if one has only learnt from Time to make good use of the experience he scatters broadcast in our laps; one can take all and give nothing; may be a Talleyrand in a small feminine way; a St. Paul, all things to all men; may twist mankind to our own wills and uses. *Helas!* that too has its drawbacks. The freshness of a *premiere jeunesse* is lost; one looks forward with horror to a time when younger rivals will tell our belated admirers, with a scornful lip-curl, that we are *passees*, when we are conscious, exaggeratedly conscious, of every dawning line and crease, and apprehend the loss of youth as the end of all things glad.

"*Que fais-je dans cette galere!*" I was going to tell you my story, beginning easily and naturally (so I thought) with my seventeenth birthday, and here I am putting down reflections of a later growth, that had no part nor lot, I am sure, in my young mind then. But one forgets—forgets at twenty-five how one thought, looked, almost how one acted at seventeen. I will bury my head in my hands, and strive to bring back the old time, after which I long now just because it is an irrevocable past, not for the reason that it was peculiarly happy or joyous.

It is half past three in the afternoon. My sisters have monopolized all the sofas in the house—namely, three, and are sleeping heavily and stertoriously after an early dinner of roast beef and fruit pudding. I know that's not important to the story, but it's a kind of trial trip to memory, and makes me think I shall be more successful in remembering the details of my young life, than I apprehended when I first took pen in hand.

On this midsummer afternoon sleep is not for mine eyes, nor rest for my body—at all events within the walls of our brick mansion, commodious enough, but unshaded by timber, to keep us cool in summer and damp in winter. We congratulated ourselves in the latter season, but in the former I am bound to say we anathematized Fate and the man who had laid out our ornamental garden. The house, which has for many years been in the possession of the family, stands surrounded by its acres of grass and corn-fields, is solid and roomy, has stables and farm buildings at the back, boasts a front-garden, garnished by many and variously-shaped flower-beds; and a most useful and extensive back-garden, devoted to the more substantial wants of the household. True, there are lilac-bushes and laburnum-trees, but these are hardly shady or thick-leaved enough to protect one comfortably from a meridian sun; and there are shady apple and pear-trees in the kitchen-garden, if one could surmount the trifling objection of planting a chair on the mold in the middle of a young carrot-bed.

Not finding shelter to my liking near home, I propose to hie me away to my favorite haunt—the Southcote Woods. The means to the end are painful and toilsome, the distance from Halling Farm, my home, to these same woods, being three quarters of a mile at least, and the road to them lying through the midst of

unsheltered corn-fields. But I pluck up my courage; the haven lies green and cool before me; I pull my broad-brimmed hat. with faded ribbons, from its peg in the hall, possess myself of a gingham umbrella, an heirloom in the family, a book, and a bunch of juicy red-cheeked cherries, and begin my pilgrimage.

"Doris! Doris!" cries a voice from an upper window, as I unlatch the garden-gate with a click, "where *are* you going?"

I look up in a little trepidation, lest my intended excursion should receive a check.

"To the Woods, mamma," I answer.

"My dear, you'll have a sunstroke, and be brought home like Martha Carson was the other day."

"Oh! no, mamma, I sha'n't. Look here," hoisting the family umbrella.

"Whatever do you want to go for? I wouldn't walk half the distance in this broiling sun for a thousand pounds."

"I don't think one feels it so much moving, mamma," I say, with Macchiavellian policy, "it's standing still that's so dangerous."

"Well, well, go along then, my dear," cries mamma—(the most unsuspecting of mortals)—hastily; "but I'm sure your complexion will be ruined."

"Good-bye!" I look up laughing; it seems so utterly ridiculous to bestow any thought on one's complexion, and I have never known the happiness of a red face in my life. I think to be apple-cheeked, like my sister Fanny, the perfection of all loveliness.

On my way I hasten, not stopping to-day to look at the golden shades of the wheat-stalks, or to pluck the blue corn-flowers and scarlet poppies, the star-faced daisies and peach-pink mallow. I hie on my way with nimble feet—for no amount of exertion could make me hotter than I already am, and the faster I speed the sooner will my goal be reached. Midway I begin to flag, my heart repents me that I have come, but it is as far now to return as to go on; so, faint and toil-worn, I crawl on, taking now and again a sudden valiant spurt that sends me well on my way. At last my earthly paradise is reached—never has it seemed so fair, so dear in my longing eyes. An awkward stile gives or prevents ingress, as the case may be; but to my tutored feet it is easy enough. A climb, a jump, and in another moment I lie panting, exhausted, but supremely happy, in a bed of fern and moss, under the shadow of trees through which the little sunbeams have not played hide-and-seek this many a year.

"The end of labor is to enjoy rest." Who said that? I know I saw it in a book once—ah, me, how true! Never, I ween, did old Nilus' splendid queen, reclining on her couch rainbow-hued with Tyrian dyes, eying with lazy content the golden waters, taste such sweet luxury as the little pale straw-hatted, cotton-gowned English girl I write of.

There, supremely happy, I lie among the soft, cool moss, canopied by broad green leaves, soothed with the tender cooing of doves, the whilom piping of the throstle to his fellows, and once now and again the sweet note of the blackbird. The host

of other selfish, idle little birds are silent, as their wont is in July; sing they will not, quarrel they will, and do violently on every occasion. Grave dissensions arise in the house, generally terminating in a division; and then the loosened leaves come floating, wafting down on my recumbent frame.

In a hollow some fifty yards distant lies a big pool of water, dark and steely in shadow, and my eyes rest with intense contentment upon it as I eat my cherries with lingering enjoyment. What a lovely place it is! I think that gratefully, lovingly, every time I come, and bless Mr. Carruthers, its owner, for the kind permission that exempts us from the rank of trespassers threatened with the terrors of the law by that big ominous black board at the entrance. Secretly in my heart I rejoice with selfish joy at the exclusion of the public from my loved haunt (not that the public in our part comprises a very large number of persons); but now I may and do come here for days together without seeing a soul, and can take my ease, as it suits me, with the maximum of ease and the minimum of elegance.

In the spring-time, the dear sweet spring-time that I love, there grow purple hyacinths in the wood and big wild violets, with roots of pale primroses clustering thick round the stems of the big girthed trees. Small delicate lilies of the valley, wood anemones, pink orchises, old-fashioned bachelor's buttons, blossom there in thick profusion; and I love them all and each, and bind them into great nosegays, which my sister scornfully dub rubbish. Then there are banks white with strawberry blossom, but I spare those until they grow into tempting red berries—no longer.

The spring flowers are gone now, and in their place bloom blue veronica and golden celendine, wild convolvulus and honeyscuckle, dog-roses and sweet wild thyme—oh, and a hundred others that I have no names for, but know full well by sight.

Later there will be big blackberries and nuts; then my young brother Harry will consent to join me, and at the close of a happy day we shall return to the paternal roof bramble-torn and fruit-stained, satisfied to our heart's core, and, as everybody says, "not fit to be seen."

Solitude has been sweet to me from my childhood up—that is, occasional solitude, for there is little of the recluse in my composition. But I am a dreamer of dreams—I inhabit a world of my own, created in my brain from many a fairy story and legend of old. My aspirations and yearnings are not after the great of this world, of whom I know nothing, save from the gossip of my sisters as they sit over their embroidery—the Marquis of This and Lord Charles That are very insignificant personages in my eyes compared with the Prince Charmings of my fairly lore or the chivalrous knights of early ages.

Though I have reached sweet seventeen, though I stand "where the brook and river meet," I still retain a lingering love of fairy tales—the very book now lying in my lap is Andersen's "Marchen."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE LITTLE MERMAID.

"Aber was kummern mich kunftige Schmerzen,
Und das sie verganglich ist, diese Lust?
Bleibt es doch Fruhling in meinem Herzen,
Bleibt es doch Fruhling in meiner Brust."

CONSIDERABLE time has elapsed since first I laid me down on the soft couch of fern and moss canopied by shaded green. I am deliciously cool now, and can think about the pursuit of literature. I turn to my pet story, for fairy tales bear a great deal more reading than other books. It is the story of the little Mermaid; and soon I am deep in her woes, thrilled with as absorbing an interest as though it were my first, instead of my twentieth reading.

With my heroine I lie rocked on the billows of the blue water, I look on the beautiful dark-eyed young prince and lose my heart, with her I seek until I find him in the palace of marble, and my soul yearns to be a mortal that he may love me. I traverse the forests of seaweed, where hideous monsters glare at me, to the witch's cave, and she changes my fish's tail to human legs, that when I move quiver with sharp pain, as though a thousand daggers had been plunged into me. And for her gift I give her my beautiful voice, so that I can never more tell the prince how I love him, save with the mute anguish of my eyes.

Drowsiness creeps over me, my eyelids begin to droop on my heavy eyes, but so well I know the story, that I can go on just as well without the book. It seems to come more real, more vividly before me now—I am the very mermaid herself dancing before the beautiful prince, while a sharp pain smites me at every step. I feel all the anguish of jealousy when he chooses the fair princess for his bride. I take my last lingering look at him the morning after his marriage, and plunge the dagger in my heart. With a great shudder, I wake: am I still dreaming, or has the fairy prince become visible to my mortal eyes? I start to a sitting posture—there, leaning against the trunk of a tree watching me intently, is a being handsomer than any woodcut of fairy prince my eyes have ever beheld. He does not move as I gaze with awe upon him; but a slight smile parts his lips, or rather his gold-brown beard, as he says coolly:

"I was waiting to see if you would vanish. I thought I had surprised the guardian nymph of this old oak."

My tongue seems chained to my mouth as I gaze at him in utter bewilderment.

"You were asleep," he says, coming a little toward me, "until a shower of acorns fell and woke you."

Still I can say nothing, but am as dumb as the poor mermaid.

"Will you waive the ceremony of an introduction, and let me talk to you a little?" he continues, throwing himself down on the moss a short distance from me, "it's so stupid having no one to talk to, isn't it?"

"Yes," I muttered at last.

"These woods are very pleasant on a hot day, aren't they?" he asks, with a look of benevolent amusement at my awkwardness on his handsome face.

"Yes," I murmur again—it is the only word that occurs to me.

I venture to look up at him, but his eyes are fixed on me, so I drop mine.

"Do you often come here?" His voice and manner are as composed and familiar as if he had known me all my life.

"Ye—es. Mr. Carruthers told papa that—that any of his family might——"

"Of course, of course," he interrupts me. "Mr. Carruthers would be only too much honored."

"Are—are you Mr. Carruthers?" I exclaim, with wide open eyes, as a sudden inspiration dawns on me.

"No," he answers, with a smile that makes him look less pleasant than I have hitherto thought him. "I am not *Mr.* Carruthers. I had the misfortune to come into the world twelve months later than that happy individual, so I am only what people call 'a poor devil of a younger brother.'"

"*His* brother?" I ask timidly, a little but not very much shocked at the last sentence.

"Yes, Wilfred Carruthers, at your service," raising his straw hat with a gesture of mock politeness.

Feeling that I have been too inquisitive, I become suffused with blushes. Had ever any one such an unfortunate trick of getting red on the smallest occasion as I?

Mr. Carruthers looks away, and does not seem to notice it.

"Did you come here all alone?" he asks presently.

"Oh, yes. It was so hot at home; we have no trees near the house, and they did not want me."

"Would it be impertinent to ask where 'home' is, and who 'they' are?" he says, looking pleasantly at me with his wonderful blue eyes.

"I live at Halling Farm, my name is Keane, and I meant my sisters when I said they," I hasten to reply.

Mr. Carruthers bends his head in acknowledgment of the information.

"And what is your name—your Christian name?" he asks, in a caressing voice; and looking shyly up at him I begin to feel that I could sit forever answering him questions and gazing at his handsome face.

"My name is Doris."

"Doris!" he repeats after me, as if surprised. Then I hear him murmur softly to himself:

> "Call me Sappho, call me Chloris,
> Call me Lalage or Doris,
> Only, only call me thine."

"How far is Halling Farm from here?" he goes on aloud, "if you don't think me too impertinently curious. The name is familiar to me, but I am so rarely in this neighborhood."

Pointing across the corn-fields, "It is over there, three fields away," I say.

"And you came all that way in the broiling sun?" he asks in astonishment.

"Oh, it was hot," I admit, "but I had these," pointing to my broad-brimmed hat and the family gingham.

Ever such a little smile curls his lip; it makes me ungratefully ashamed for the first time in my life of that venerable friend of the house, and more of my own poor shabby garments.

I think he reads my feelings, for he says kindly:

"I don't think even *I* should mind the heat protected by that hat and umbrella."

Seized with a sudden idea of the ludicrous, I laugh aloud. I fancy I behold this exquisite trudging along with the gingham: it would not have seemed much more out of place in the delicate hands of the fairy prince.

"What are you reading?" he asks, lazily stretching out his hand for my book.

"Andersen's fairy tales," I answer, handing it over to him.

"But you should read them in the original," he says, after a glance at the cover.

"I don't know German," I reply, rather ashamed of my ignorance.

"French?" This interrogatively.

I shake my head. "Very little," more ashamed still.

"And are you fond of fairy stories?"

"Very," I reply, enthusiastically this time.

"How old are you, if it is not an impertinent question?"

"Seventeen to-day."

"Indeed! May I wish you many happy returns of the day?" he asks very courteously.

Surely, I think, no fairy prince ever had more fascinating manners than this handsome being at my feet.

"Would you like me to lend you some fairy tales?" he says presently. "I have some that I am quite sure you never read. I translated them from the German myself."

"Oh, thank you," I cry, delighted.

"How shall I get them to you?" he asks. "Will you come to-morrow and fetch them?"

"Yes, indeed, thank you."

"Do you know a very big old tree, with a hollow trunk, about five hundred yards further up in the woods?"

I nod assent.

"Then I'll put the book there for you, or, if I can, I will bring it myself about four o'clock."

"Thank you very, very much," I exclaim gratefully.

"You have nothing to thank me for; the pleasure is mine," says Mr. Carruthers, with his wonderful smile.

"I must go now," I utter regretfully, preparing to arise.

He jumps up, putting out his hands to raise me. Bitterly ashamed am I to give mine, stained green with moss, and blue with cherry-juice—more than ever when he regards them attentively.

"It is seven o'clock," taking out his watch.

"Then I shall be late for tea," exclaim I, with some trepidation.

"And I have to dress for dinner. Good-bye, Miss Doris," with outstretched hand for my reluctant one. "You won't forget to-morrow."

"No, indeed." As if I *could* forget.

"Let me help you over the stile."

"Oh! no, thank you," and I bound over in a moment. He stands watching me, I know by instinct; not for all the world would I put up that obnoxious gingham in his sight—sooner be carried home smitten with sunstroke, like Martha Carson!

---

## CHAPTER III.

### HALLING FARM.

"I thought it would be something worth the pain
Of parting, to look once in those deep eyes,
And take from them an answering look again."

THE sun beats fiercely down upon me, only a shade less fiercely than when I passed through the corn-fields three hours before; but I am supremely, Spartanly indifferent to it now. On I walk with buoyant step, radiant with delight at my adventure, my thoughts full of Wilfred Carruthers. How handsome, how noble, how distinguished-looking he is! I can recall every feature of his perfect face.

The great dark blue eyes shaded by black lashes, the straight nose, the curved lips, and the pearly teeth only half hidden by his golden brown beard; and hair of darkest brown curling gracefully round the classic Greek head. Ah! that is a man fit to be a hero if ever man was—tall, lithe, strong, beautiful altogether. So I think, falling down mentally and worshiping him. In all my life I have never spoken to a man of his position. My sisters go to balls where they meet fashionable men, and dance with them sometimes; but I stay at home, being of course only a child, seeing no male society from year's end to year's end, except that of my father and brothers, the clergyman and the doctor. Hitherto no thoughts of the sterner sex have troubled me. I have never looked forward to such a thing as a lover. Once, two or three years ago, I was an object of tender interest to the red-headed son of a lawyer in the town, who had shown his affection in the very practical way of presenting me frequently with jam tarts and toffee. But having unfortunately upon one occasion sat upon the offering as I was going to my dancing lesson, and spoiled a pink muslin frock, I was forbidden to receive any more presents from my admirer, and the acquaintance gradually dropped.

To-day, however, suddenly, at once and without warning, on this my seventeenth birthday, my Fate has come to me, and I fell hopelessly, utterly, head over ears in love with Mr. Wilfred Carruthers.

At that point I stop, as is the wont of young girls who dip their feet the first time into the brook. I do not picture to myself that he will think of me, that I shall ever be anything to

him, or he to me; but rest in simple content that I have seen this demi-god, that he has been good to me, and that I am going to see him again—perhaps—to-morrow.

There is one drawback to this delicious adventure—the impossibility of confiding it to any one, and I want so to talk about *him;* to expatiate on his beauty, his grace, his goodness.

For all the world I dare not tell them at home what has happened—they might forbid me to go again to the woods, and if I should never see him any more—the hot blood courses into my cheeks with terror at the bare thought. Then a sudden feeling of guiltiness creeps over me—am I not doing wrong in concealing this meeting? Is it not deceiving my parents?

"What harm can there be in it!" I try to comfort myself by arguing. "At least I will wait until to-morrow." But the drop of poison is already infused into my cup of sweetness. My mind is not at rest.

When I reach home, they are all assembled at tea.

"Late as usual," says Fanny, my elder sister.

"Where *have* you been in this heat?" exclaims Julia, the second.

"There's no more tea," cries Anna, the third, who presides over the tea-pot.

"Come along and sit by me, Cissy," says Jack, my eldest brother, whose pet I am.

We are seven, not according to the reckoning of Wordsworth's little maid; but seven, all alive, strong, healthy, and at this moment assembled under one roof. Jack has a farm of his own, some five miles distant. Fred is with a land agent, and Harry, the youngest, goes to the grammar-school in the town. We four girls of course live at home: my three sisters have been to school, and are now finished young ladies, but my education has been somewhat desultory, from having been undertaken first by one and then the other, and finally completed by a year at Miss Bancroft's establishment in Colton, where I really did learn something, thanks to the efforts of a painstaking teacher, who conceived an affection for me. But I am at home now for good, and know my sisters are rather inclined to look upon me as an interloper, useful enough to run up and down-stairs, to fetch and carry for them, but utterly unfit to share in their conversation or amusements. I am not at all unhappy on this account. The boys all dote on me, my father and mother show me as much affection if less consideration than they give my sisters. *Seniores priores*, of course, the youngest always has something to put up with.

I do not want to go to balls, nor to be dressed grandly, nor to attract the attention of any gentlemen who come to see Fanny, or Julia, or Anna. I am delighted to read my books, to romp with the boys, to ride on a rough pony that Jack gave me, and to enjoy my solitude in the Southcote woods. So on the whole I think we are quite as united as most large families, and if there is any quarreling it is generally in the drawing-room, where my sisters sit at fancy-work all the morning. They

spend a great deal of time in lamenting the decadence of the Keane family and fortunes.

My father and his fathers for many generations have been squires of some degree in a northern county; the present representative of the race having speculated or been robbed—at all events having got rid of his money in some way, has for the last twenty years been obliged to live quietly at our present home, Halling Farm, left him by a distant relation.

We should be swells in our own county, my sisters say, but here in the exclusive neighborhood of Colton we are not thought very much of, as being poor we cannot entertain or make much show. People just notice us; my sisters go to the public balls in Colton, and are now and then invited to a few private ones, but we cannot certainly flatter ourselves on being reckoned in the list of county families. Not one whit does this trouble me, though it is a source of very bitter mortification to my sisters, imbued as they are with extremely grand notions. I am too much occupied with my own domestic affairs, namely, my cat and three kittens, two dogs, a pig, and pony (both presents from Jack), and an important family of hens and chickens.

"Come and sit by me, Cissy" (the boys always call me Cissy), cries Jack as I enter; and gladly enough I fling my hot, exhausted limbs into the chair he puts for me.

"Why, Cis, wherever have you been?" cries Harry. "I went to look for you to show you my young rabbits, but you'd skedaddled, as the Yankees say."

"I've been up in the woods, Harry," I return innocent answer.

"Why, you little goose!" cries Jack. "You never walked across those fields this broiling afternoon!"

"But I did indeed, Jack; and oh! it was so delicious, you can't think. I'm so thirsty, Anna, do be quick and give me my tea."

"There isn't any," says Anna. "You should come in in proper time."

"Stuff and humbug!" shouts Jack irately. He is always sparring with my sisters on my account. "Give her her tea, Anna, or I'll come and get it myself."

"You may if you like," retorts Anna, holding the tea-pot with the spout downward, to show that it is literally empty.

"Upon my life, it's too bad the way you treat that child," cries my big brother, angrily.

"Never mind," I interrupt, for I cannot bear to see Jack sent out. "Give me the milk."

"There's no milk either," replies Anna.

"Don't make a row," interrupts Fred, the general peacemaker, seeing that Jack looks black as thunder. "I'll go and get some;" and, catching up the jug, he darts off.

"Really, Fred," deprecates Fanny, "I wish you'd ring the bell, and let the servants bring what is wanted;" but Fred is gone before she is half through the sentence. Back he comes in a moment with the jug replenished.

Jack plies me with everything on the table, so I am not a very injured individual, after all. Somehow I lack my usual robust

and healthy appetite to-night—whether it is the heat or excitement of my adventure I can't say; but Jack looks seriously concerned, for he holds firm by the doctrine, that if you cannot eat, there must be something very wrong about you.

"I say, Cis," cries Harry, "you missed such a treat this afternoon."

"What?" I inquire.

"Why, Mr. Carruthers came past here with his team, and a lot of the officers from Colton with him. And those great lazy girls were all asleep on the sofas, or they'd have seen 'em too. I say, Ju, the fellow with the red beard you're always going into Colton to look after was with 'em."

"What a story! How dare you say such a thing!" cries Julia, red and angry.

Harry makes a face at her across the table; boys of fourteen, except in juvenile story-books, are seldom pleasant of manner to their sisters.

"Ugh! you spitfire! You know you did! And Fan was after the black one, but he wasn't there."

"Harry!" I begin, hoping devoutly I shall not blush. "What is Mr. Carruthers like?"

Jack turns to look at me; and then of course I am crimson in a moment.

"Why, little Cis is coming out!" he laughs good-naturedly. "I never heard her ask a question about a man before. That comes of being seventeen, I suppose."

"Oh, he's a big, good-looking chap," says Harry, in reply to my question.

"Fair or dark?" I venture again, determined to hear something of the man whom I look upon as the natural enemy of my hero.

"Oh, I don't know. Light, I suppose; sandy whiskers and blue eyes."

"Sandy!" retorts Anna, indignantly. "Why, they're the most lovely gold color. He's wonderfully handsome."

"When did you see him, pray, miss?" inquires Harry, scornfully.

"The other day in Colton, walking up the High Street with Lady Flora Lyon. She's trying to catch him, I know, by the way she looked at him."

"Is it the same way Ju looks at the red-headed chap?" says Harry, dropping his eyes with a comical leer; and every one bursts out laughing except Ju, who gets up in a rage, and tries to box his ears. But he dodges her hand, and is out of the room in a moment, stopping at the door to make a derisive gesture.

The party breaks up. My sisters go to don their hats for a walk. I stroll into the garden, hanging on Jack's arm, while he smokes his pipe.

Jack is the eldest of the family, a big, broad-shouldered, good-looking fellow of eight-and-twenty; and I am his favorite sister. He pets, fondles, and spoils me to his heart's content; and if ever any one in this world appreciated being loved and made much of, it's I, Doris Keane.

"Cissy," he begins, as we stroll down the road together in the delicious twilight, "I have a treat for you."

"Oh! you dear thing!" I cry eagerly. "What is it?"

"I've got the mum's consent, and you're to come home with me to-night and sleep at the farm, and I'll bring you back this time to-morrow."

My heart almost stands still. Any other time I should have been frantic with joy at such a proposal; now as I think of Wilfred Carruthers, the hollow oak, and my fairy tales, it sounds in my ears like some awful sentence of banishment.

We are leaning against a gate; there is a profound hush all around; a delicious steamy scent comes up from the ground as the dew begins to fall, and out in the dark blue vault of heaven come shining myriads of golden stars.

A feeling almost of agony creeps over me. The horror of seeming ungracious to my dear, kind brother, the impossibility of telling him the truth, and the awful alternative of not meeting Wilfred Carruthers, present themselves all at once to my mind.

"Why, Cissy, you don't say anything?" exclaims Jack, as I remain silent. "I thought you'd have been wild to go."

"So I should, Jack, but, but——"

"But what, child?"

There is another long pause.

"But what, child?" asks Jack again, a little impatiently this time.

"Oh, if you'd only say some other day instead," I exclaim eagerly.

"But I can't. To-morrow is the only day I have free for an age. Why, I thought you'd have been ready to jump out of your shoes at the bare idea!" and Jack turns away evidently annoyed.

"What is it you're going to do?" he inquires presently with some irritation as I still remain silent. "I suppose you can tell me that."

"Oh, Jack, dear, *dear* Jack," I cry, putting my arms around his neck, and dragging his head down to me; "don't ask me, dear, darling Jack! And don't say a word to any one of them about it. Promise me, oh, do, do promise me!"

Jack gazes at me bewildered.

"What on earth has come to the child!" he mutters. "I could understand if it was one of the others. I should know they were off to meet some fellow, but it can't be that with you, Cis?"

At this moment I feel the guiltiest creature in all the world.

"Will you promise me," I whisper, putting all my powers of pleading into one concentrated sob of eagerness.

"Well, well, I suppose I must," he answers rather crossly; "but you're a strange young puss—that comes of being seventeen, I suppose—girls do get odd. But I say, Cis, you're sure you're not going to be up to any mischief?"

"Oh, no, no indeed, Jack," I cry eagerly—for thought of mischief I have honestly none.

---

## CHAPTER IV.

### AN INVENTORY.

"Behind the veil, forbidden,
Shut up from sight.
Love, is there sorrow hidden,
Is there delight?
Is joy thy dower or grief,
White rose of weary leaf:
Late rose whose life is brief, whose loves are light?"

WHEN I retire to my room, on the night of this eventful day, I carefully extinguish the candle and sit down by the open window, resting my chin in my hands. It is a sultry night, with only the faintest breath of wind stirring, but I am grateful for even that small mercy, and lean my head eagerly forward to drink it in. As the heavy dew falls on the parched earth, it sends up a fragrant steamy odor, and in at my window floats the sweet scent of dark red roses and yellow jasmine climbing beneath. The moon has come out now, and my eyes wander dreamily across the corn-fields and meadows, away to Colton, where the pointed spires of our cathedral stand clear, against the sky.

I am thinking, of course, about my fairy prince, every feeling heightened by the romance of the hour and the calm beauty of the scene; thinking of the meeting in the woods, longing keenly for the morrow; impatient of the night hours to be given to dull sleep, and the homely avocations that lie between me and the next sight of my hero. I have heard the boys their lessons many a time, and am grown familiar with Greek heroes; now it pleases me to fancy Mr. Wilfred Carruthers their prototype, with his classic head, ambrosial curls, deep colored eyes, and fine curved lips. In my heart I am quite incensed to think of his elder brother as big, strong, and handsome; there seems no chance of his pining away to make room for one on whose brows the dignity of empire sits (to my way of thinking)—that being "only a poor devil of a younger brother!"

There is rather a spice about that expression now I repeat it to myself, perhaps because the enormity of pronouncing the word devil has been duly impressed on my young mind. It occurs to me for the first time now to wonder what Mr. Carruthers thinks of me. Nothing very complimentary, I surmise with tingling cheeks as the remembrance of my tangled locks, stained fingers, and rumpled gown rises vividly before me. I wonder with sudden horror if the cherries had stained my mouth as well as my hands—several times he had seemed to be looking at it, no doubt there was the reason. I feel angry at myself for having hitherto taken so little pains with my personal appearance; now that I am seventeen (almost a woman, I tell myself importantly), it is time that I should take more pride in myself, and think something of the elegancies as well as the uses of the toilet. In a train of thought the succession of ideas is very rapid; now I am wondering, for the first time in my life, if I have any

pretensions to good looks. It is a subject that has never yet been mooted either by myself or my family. I dare say that in towns where girls are brought out early, constantly seeing and mixing with grown-up people, irrespective of their own belongings, the question of their attractions becomes important to them at a very early age; but for me, who have comparatively speaking run wild in the country all my life, who have never received attention or consideration from any one (the hero of jam tart and toffee memories alone excepted), it is a matter of such perfect indifference that I don't think any one has ever troubled his head about it.

I always wear the rejected garments of one of my sisters, the fit whereof is little regarded: so that they are taken in considerably, as I am slim and slight of figure.

A sudden inspiration seizes me on this evening of my seventeenth birthday. I light the candle and put it on the toilet-table near the glass—a small and hazy mirror, be it acknowledged. Hitherto it has been sufficient for my wants, to-night I am exceedingly malcontent with its dim and garbled reflection. Perhaps more light would help me; but alas, where to procure it? an end of mold candle is all the illumination permitted to the youngest female scion of the house of Keane.

But my imaginative brain is not yet at the end of its resources. Suddenly I remember the cupboard on the stairs where Hepzibah the housemaid is wont to secrete miscellaneous articles, such as bits of soap, dusters, candle-ends, etc., etc.

Taking off my shoes, I creep toward the door, which, spite of all my care, creaks horribly as I open it; and then, like a conspirator or housebreaker, I look furtively up and down the passage. All is dark and silent. On tip-toe I creep past Fanny's and Julia's room toward the stairs, unfasten the button of the door, trembling as guiltily as though I had designs on the family plate, and in a moment more am groping in the cupboard, which an unsavory and tallowy odor pervades. I possess myself of something that, by the feel of it, must, I know, be a candle-end, and prepare to make good my retreat. Out I come, and with a stifled shriek fall into the arms of a man who is creeping up the stairs. In my terror I drop my treasure, which rolls with successive thuds down every stair until it comes to the mat at the bottom.

"What the devil!" utters Jack's hearty voice, in a suppressed tone; and reassured, I gasp out:

"Oh! Jack, how could you frighten me so?"

"I like that," he retorts, in an audible whisper, "when you ought to have been in bed an hour or more, you naughty little puss! What have you been up to?"

"It was so hot, I couldn't go to bed," say I, feeling it is an equivocation, if not a downright story.

"But what the dickens were you doing in the cupboard?" inquires Jack, severely.

"I wanted a piece more candle, and you've made me drop it," I add, dolorously.

"Well, well, I'll get you another, if you must have it," says my big brother, good-humoredly.

"But we must find that, or Hepzibah will tell mamma of me, Jack," I whisper.

"All right, Cis, I'll look for it," he replies, creeping downstairs, shoeless as I am. "I can't find it," he mutters, as I stand in anxious expectation on the stairs while he gropes about. "*Con*found it! I've put my foot upon it!" is the next intelligence; and up he comes, with a mangled mass of wax in his fingers, at which I am almost ready to cry with vexation.

At this moment a bedroom door opens in the passage, and my father's voice calls out irately:

"Who on earth is making all that row out there?"

"Oh! Jack, don't say I am here!" I whisper, in an agonized *sotto voce.*

"It's me, sir," growls Jack. "I dropped my candle."

"Well, I suppose you needn't stand palavering about it on the stairs, if you have," retorts my father. "Who's that with you?"

I squeeze my brother's arm imploringly.

"It's Fred," he says, aloud.

"Then don't let me hear any more of either of you," returns my father, crossly, shutting the door.

"There, miss," utters Jack, angrily, "you've made me tell a lie; and if there's one thing I hate more than another, it's lying. Now go to bed directly."

I hug him round the neck, and retreat to my room, but not to bed. No, not to bed, but to pat, and smooth, and squeeze my bruised candle-end into shape, and stuff it into an old broken china candlestick, by which time my original piece of mold is drawing near its end. Then I sit down in front of my six square inches of mirror, and proceed calmly to consider what claims I have to personal beauty.

This is the inventory I make out; A small white face, garnished with an abundance of waving, refractory chestnut locks; eyes of undoubted size but dubious color—for they have been called green, yellow, gray, brown by turns—(a competent authority has since declared them hazel); a mouth that, though not diminutive, is decidedly the best part of me, seeing it is filled with small regular teeth; and—and I would rather not say anything about my nose, because I don't think any distinctive name has been affixed to that particular style of proboscis, although it is certainly not uncommon.

I rise from my survey disappointed. A lingering hope had lurked in my breast that I should be rewarded for my pains by the conviction that I am beautiful; but such, alas! is not the case.

"You are a poor little doll-faced thing!" I ejaculate with ire to my reflection; "and I am sure Mr. Carruthers would not care to look at you twice."

Twelve booms sonorously from the cathedral clock, and, horrified at the lateness of the hour, I divest me quickly of my attire, and jump into my doll's bed, as Jack irreverently calls my pink and white couch.

I do not lie awake all night thinking of my Greek hero, as I have rather proposed to myself doing, but fall fast asleep, and sleep the sound, dreamless sleep of childhood, until Hepzibah calls me in the morning.

"Get up, miss, do!" exclaims that irrascible hand-maid; "how you can sleep with the sun a-pourin' in like a hoven, and the birds a-makin' up that clatteraction, I don't know."

"All right. What's the time?" I say.

"Time?—time you was dressed and down-stairs a-feedin' your chickings," retorts Hepzibah.

"Well, why didn't you call me before?"

"Call you before!" screams Hepzibah, who has a disagreeable way of repeating one's words. "Why, I've bin in twicet. The prayer-bell 'll be ringin' in a minnut."

Thus admonished, I leap from my couch, perform my toilet with vigorous haste, and manage to be down in the dining-room just as my father opens the book. The boys are in attendance, also the servants; my sisters, always late, don't affect family prayers. Jack has not gone, as I declined to accompany him on the previous evening, but means to start the moment after breakfast.

Time lags heavily with me to-day, in spite of all I can do. Puss and her family fed, Nero and Wagtail ditto, I go and see Jack off, who forbearingly utters no reproach at my desertion; then away I trot with Harry (it is his holidays), to see the young rabbits and visit my pig; also to hunt for eggs in all manner of inconvenient places, where my perverse hens will insist on laying. Then I fling my hat on the polished floor in the keeping-room, and sit me down on a low stool to shell a mountain of peas into a yellow basin. This done, the Irish cook blarneys me into stripping stalks off currants for jam, and I acquiesce, being extremely amenable to compliment and coaxing. I wash my hands, try a little water color painting, and at last—at last the bell sounds, and we sit down to two o'clock dinner. I am too nervous to eat very much—my eyes fix themselves every moment on the clock, which I keep thinking must have stopped.

Jubilant I am inwardly, though somewhat guilty at heart, and I keep thinking how surprised they would be if they all knew I had an appointment with a grand, handsome individual.

"Doris!" says my sister Julia, in the middle of dinner, "I think I shall go with you to the woods this afternoon."

I feel as if a bucket of cold water had been suddenly poured upon me. I grow crimson, then white, tears force themselves into my foolish eyes, and I begin hastily to swallow scalding milk pudding.

"Do you hear?" she says again.

"Yes," I make answer, thinking of an air from "Sonnambula" I learned on the piano entitled, "All is lost now."

"Well, you're not very gracious," remarks my sister. "I should have thought you'd be delighted to get any one to go with you."

"I'm—I'm not sure I'm going," stammer I, feeling that I must

do something, anything to prevent so awful a catastrophe as my sister accompanying me.

"Then I shall go by myself," she retorts loftily.

Dinner is happily over. I rush away to my room, bolting the door after me, and I fling myself down by my bed, and cry as if my heart would break Had ever such a terrible calamity fallen upon mortal being since the world began as this?

If she *should* go, if he should meet her, and talk to her, it will be the death of me, I think. And Julia is pretty, with a red and white complexion, and wears a blue muslin dress and a bewitching hat with a wreath of daisies. He might tell her of his meeting with me, and she would come home and denounce me.

Tears fall from my eyes like April rains. Presently I rise and look at myself in the glass. There I see a white face, swollen and distorted eyes, red and closed up, and I say to myself:

"I can't go now, even if she changes her mind."

The half hour after three chimes from the clock on the stairs, and a moment afterward the gate opens with a click. I rush to the window.

Julia has kept her word—there she goes, with blue dress, hat and marguerites, silk sunshade. Irresistible, I think miserably. I watch her with straining eyes—she crosses the road, gets over the stile, very awkwardly, I think, into the corn-field, and saunters along in the broiling sun. I am almost wicked enough to wish her the fate of Martha Carson; dreadful unsisterly feelings are gaining ground in my wicked heart, when suddenly—can I believe my eyes? She turns and retraces her steps.

She can't stand the heat after all. Oh, jubilate! I fly to the washing-stand, douse my disfigured face with cold water, tear off my frock, substitute a clean brown-holland (I daren't put on my Sunday muslin, for fear of exciting suspicion), twist up my hair somehow with a blue ribbon through the midst, seize my silk umbrella from its covering, and with my second-best hat and blue ribbons tossed on anyhow, I dash out through the back garden and stables at racing speed, and am in the corn-field.

---

## CHAPTER V.

### THE STORMS OF APRIL.

"Where love is great the littlest doubts are fear—
Where little fears grow great, great loves grow there."

I HAVE forgotten that my cheeks are white, eyes red and swollen, and that I am looking "a figure," or, rather, I have not forgotten it, but I do not care. See *him* I must, were I ten times less presentable. It is not my beauty certainly that has taken his fancy, so what matter if I look a shade uglier or prettier? Whether he cares to see me is no subject for my consideration now, but it is the one great necessity of my life I feel to see him. So I career on across the shadeless corn-fields, as though it were a winter's day, instead of ninety-six in the shade. Even when I have climbed the stile, I do not pause,

though the perspiration stands in great beads on my face, and I have not a dry thread on me, as Hepzibah elegantly expresses it.

Swiftly I make for the hollow-trunked oak, a horror seizing me lest he should already have come and gone. I arrive at the tree, and peep curiously in the hiding-place. No book yet, so with a sense of intense relief I fling myself down under the beneficent shade of the monarch of the woods, and hope devoutly my Greek hero will not make his appearance until I have time to grow somewhat cooler.

My wish is granted. Five o'clock chimes faintly on my ear from the distant cathedral; I am cool, and Mr. Carruthers has not made his appearance. I wait very patiently, absorbed in my thoughts, now and then arranging a fold in my dress, and improving the elegance of my *pose*, for painful thoughts have occurred to me with regard to the attitude in which he found me slumbering the day before. At last I begin to get a little weary, a little impatient, but do not like to move, for fear of disturbing the effect I have been at some pains to arrange. Time comes when I can bear it no longer, and springing to my feet, I walk further into the woods, and peer anxiously through each green arcade for my tardy hero.

"'He cometh not,' she said."

I am in a poetic and Tennysonian mood to-day—for, ignorant little country-girl though I am, I have a Tennyson, and a well-worn one, too.

Almost pettishly I come back to my tree, flinging myself down under its branches, and bethinking me of my poet's talking oak, I repeat to myself the verse that seems most appropriate:

"For oft I talked with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarized a heart
And answered with a voice."

"I wish you would do that, you tiresome, stupid old oak!" I say irately; but there is not even the faintest rustle in answer to my irreverent address.

A tempting cluster of dark red strawberries nestles almost within my reach, but I will not even take the trouble to stretch my hand for them. I look at my fingers, which are white and clean to-day, and am almost angry at the trouble I have taken with them, since it is all for nothing.

Six o'clock strikes; I am working myself into a frenzy of pain and disappointment. "He will not come now," I mutter to myself, yet straining my eyes anxiously in the direction whence I expect him. Then I drag the soft moss up furiously by the roots, and fling it far away. I do not even spare my dear wild-flowers, but beat at them savagely with the end of my umbrella. Half past six ring the distant chimes, and, rising slowly, with a sob choking in my throat, I prepare to go home. But first I take one long desperate last look—in vain! Slowly, with a heart full of bitterness, I retrace my steps to the broad green shade embosoming the steely water pool, where yesterday I saw *him*. I

can bear it no longer, and throw myself down on the grass, crying and sobbing. Oh! I was so miserable, so miserable! I could have flung myself into the big dark pond, and there they might have found me on the morrow, dead, with white face upturned, my hair tangled in green weed.

This came of being seventeen, of seeing and speaking for the first time to a handsome man, and falling straightway in love with him, like the little idiot I was. "Oh! how he would laugh if he could only see me now!" I say, trying to shame myself out of my folly; but it is no use; and wailing, "Oh! if he would only, only come and let me see him once more!" I dig my nails into the green moss and fern in passionate misery. Long-drawn sighs and sobs rend my poor heaving chest, tears rain from my eyes as if the flood-gates were let loose; and as I am in the very midst of my paroxysm, a voice close beside me says tenderly:

"Doris!"

Smitten with sudden terror, I look up to see William Carruthers, and, ah! fatal day, he sees *me*, with my swollen eyes and quivering throat, looking, I know, the most hideous object his eyes ever beheld. Worse than all, a horrible idea seizes me that he knows what I have been weeping and gnashing my teeth about. It's no use, I can't stop all of a sudden. I don't often indulge in a fit of crying, but when I do it's a very serious matter. So for a minute or two my chest goes on heaving, my mouth sobbing, and my eyes raining, until he says:

"For God's sake, child, don't cry so!"

"It's—it's—n—nothing." I try to gulp out; but he throws himself down beside me, and possesses himself of one of my hands. Before I know what he is doing, he is kissing and smoothing it in his; and I am so utterly prostrate and overwhelmed with shame, that I let him do as he pleases, unresisting.

"Did you think I was not coming?" he says tenderly; and I snatch my hand away and crimson indignantly, because he has discovered the cause of my anguish. I avert my face, but he does not seem to mind; and takes my reluctant hand again, saying, "I have been in a fever all the afternoon, thinking you would be waiting for me; but my brother had invited some men over from Colton, and I could not get away."

I forgot my anger now he has told me that *he* wanted to come; nevertheless I try to get up a little acting, which may or may not have the effect of deceiving him.

"It's—it's so hot," I falter, and I walked very fast. "I—I think there's going to be a thunderstorm. It always upsets me."

"Does it?" he says with an amused smile, that shows me the utter futility of my attempt to throw dust in his eyes. "I hope it won't come on before we get to Lord Elsleigh's."

I am silent, and blush very much.

"What a dear little hand!" he says presently, smoothing and kissing it again.

I feel sure it must smell very earthy and ferny after my destructive fit. But it is a sense of propriety, not the former thought, that makes me say:

"Oh! please don't—you mustn't!"

"Why?" he asks, looking at me with surprise; and I leave it there, feeling as if the impropriety is mine in making any remark at all upon the subject.

"Is Lady Flora Lyon very beautiful?" I ask presently. Lady Flora is Lord Elsleigh's daughter.

"She's rather handsome," Mr. Carruthers replies.

"And—and is your brother going to marry her?" I say shyly.

"If he is he has not confided his intention to me," Mr. Carruthers answers. "I don't suppose Vivian will marry just yet—he's too good a judge."

I look askance at my Greek hero, not quite comprehending the last speech, but am afraid to ask for an explanation.

There is a slight pause in the conversation. Mr. Carruthers looks away over my head, his eyes filled with a melancholy expression. Furtively I glanced at him, thinking how beautiful those same eyes are, half-raised, with their wonderful transparent blue like a sapphire, and the long lashes fringing them. Not for the world would I disturb his reverie, but wait patiently until his soul shall return to consciousness of mundane and terrestrial matters. Presently it does return, and he says, turning his gaze on me:

"I was fancying myself far away in a haunted forest of the olden times, with a little wood-nymph, visible only to my mortal eyes."

I wonder if he means me for the wood-nymph, and if so how he can be reconciled to the idea of the said nymph having red, swollen eyelids and tear-streaked cheeks. I am also reminded of the book of fairy tales, and say:

"Did you bring my book?"

"By Jove! I forgot all about it," cries Mr. Carruthers; and somehow I feel more pleased and flattered by the omission than if he had brought me twenty books.

"Never mind," I hasten to say, "it does not matter the least."

"But you shall have it," he rejoins; "I will send them round to-night."

"Oh, no, please don't!" I cry, getting very red; and turning, he looks at me with a little smile that seems to say, "I understand—you don't want the people at home to know of our meetings here."

"Why?" he asks provokingly; then, seeing my tears ready to spring forth again, adds quickly. "I will put it in our old friend the hollow oak for you."

"Thank you," I murmur; and, feeling very anxious to know when I may have the supreme happiness of seeing him again, I venture a shy. "When?"

"Well, I don't think I can tell you that," he answers with a smile that makes me feel a very young child indeed; "but you come very often, don't you? Well, you must look every time until you find it."

Something grates on me in that last speech. I don't know what or why, but I feel very small, and look away to the pool

with a vexed, disappointed feeling. Probably he reads my face—it is a dreadfully tell-tale one, for he says softly:

"You may be sure I shall take the first opportunity of seeing my little wood-nymph again."

Smiles dimple over my face once more! I am quite happy. He looks at his watch. Oh! what enemy of mankind invented those horrid reminders?

"I must be off!" he cries, jumping up. "I shall be late as it is; the carriage is ordered at half past seven, and it is five minutes past now."

I rise too, and he, coming close to me, stoops his face to mine. I tremble exceedingly, and start away with my cheeks all aflame.

"Don't!" I gasp.

He draws himself bolt upright in an instant, and says in a tone so different from what he used before:

"Certainly not, if it is unpleasant to you."

So terrified am I by the coldness of his manner, that I feel inclined to fall at his feet and beseech him to do me the honor of saluting me as much as he feels disposed; but while I am yet irresolute, he smiles, and raising my hand to his lips, kisses it respectfully.

"Good-bye, Miss Doris."

I lift my eyes imploringly to his, and murmur indistinctly:

"You are not angry with me?"

"Angry, my dear child!" he says, in a caressing voice; "assuredly not. I was only mistaken—I thought you liked me a little; if you had, you would not have shrunk away from my kiss, but rather offered your lips first to mine. It is the woman's place, not the man's, to show what is in her heart. Such proof ennobles her, but it degrades him. Good-bye," and with a kind pressure of my hand, Mr. Carruthers leaves me.

I remain standing in the same spot for I know not how long, not even turning to watch his receding figure. A cold grasp seems to have been laid on my heart; a vague feeling of shame and disappointment gnaws at me. I have offended him—he will never see me any more perhaps. It was unmaidenly, unwomanly, to refuse his caress; and yet, and yet—oh! I cannot quite bring my mind to think that I should have been right in accepting it. I begin to wonder if there is something very wrong and bad in my own mind to make me so shocked at what he evidently considers a simple thing. I wind up by thinking that the proper course would have been to allow him to do as he pleased. (Poor little ignorant babe that I was in those days! No match for a man of the world, who knew and calculated the effect of every word on a poor simple mind like mine.) I think with horror that I have cut myself off from his notice forever, that I have disappointed him, and that now he will never want to see me any more.

In this frame of mind, my steps turn themselves lingeringly homeward. I shall be severely reprimanded by everybody for my lateness—it is striking eight at this very moment; but the lesser trouble is swallowed up in the greater, and I don't care,

"Though father and mother and all should go mad,"

as saith the words of an old Scotch song that Fred is fond of indulging in.

Entering the dining-room of the paternal mansion, I find it empty—tea has been cleared away. I am proceeding to the kitchen to ask for something to eat, when I am met by Fred.

"I say," he whispers, "they're all in such a wax with you. Those beasts (*anglice* my sisters) have been egging the governor and the mum on, and they've forbidden the servants to give you anything to eat. But I coaxed old Moll Flanagan (the boys' name for our Hibernian *chef*), and I've taken you up a jolly tea into your bedroom and hidden it in the shoe cupboard."

I don't know whether it was my sisters' unkindness, Fred's goodness, or the exciting events of the day, but I put my head on his shoulder and begin to cry for the third time that day. I suppose seventeen is the April of one's life, and requires a good many storms to bring forth the May flowers.

"Poor old darling!" says Fred, tenderly stroking my hair. "I should like to horsewhip those nasty mischief-making wretches," he adds, vindictively. "I hate all the lot of them."

"Never mind, Fred," I sob. "It's not a—about them I'm cr—crying. I—I don't feel well—I shall go to bed and—and you can tell them I—I'm not coming down any m—more to-night."

"Poor little dear!" says sympathetic Fred, and snatching me up in his strong arms he carries me to my room, where, after carefully bolting the door, he hastens to produce the banquet from the cupboard.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### MR. CARRUTHERS OF SOUTHCOTE.

"Look here upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers."

HALF an hour has elapsed. Fred is gone again, after disposing of the remains of the feast which, to his disappointment, I have not done much justice to. I am sitting by the open window, feeling very miserable, when there comes an authoritative rap at the door, and my mother enters. I know I am going to be scolded, but feel quite callous, though I assume a respectful and attentive demeanor. It is, I know, most distasteful to my poor mother to lecture any one, but she has been "egged on to it," as Fred says.

"Doris," she commences, advancing into the room, "what is the meaning of your extraordinary behavior?"

Silent I sit, and she resumes with increased severity.

"Do you imagine that you, almost the youngest person in the house, are to be allowed to set all rules at defiance—to absent yourself whenever you choose?"

I can find nothing to reply.

"Your papa is extremely displeased with you, and so am I," mamma goes on, evidently puzzled to continue.

I rise, and throwing my arms round her neck, burst into the fourth flood of tears.

I beseech the gentle reader not to believe that I am always given to the melting mood. I may venture to say no tears have fallen from my eyes for at least twelve months previous to the present time.

My mother, astonished and rather frightened at so unwonted an ebullition, forgets her vicarious wrath, and soothes me, saying:

"There, there, my dear. Come, don't be so foolish—now—pray, Doris. Dry your eyes, child, and you shall come downstairs and have some tea."

I am on the point of mentioning that I have had my tea, but remember in time not to betray Fred.

"I dare say you're faint for want of something, and you've upset yourself going out in the broiling sun. I won't have you do it again. Now, come down with me, and I'll make your peace with papa."

"Oh! no, please, mamma," I entreat. "I do not want any tea, and do—do let me go to bed—I am so tired. And indeed—indeed I did not mean to displease you and papa, but—but—it was so pleasant in the woods——"

So any one would have thought if they had seen how my afternoon was spent.

"Well, well, we won't say any more about it," replies my mother, "only don't let it happen again. Go to bed if you like. Good-night, my dear."

And kissing me, she retires. Still I remain at the window, and presently Hepzibah enters with a tray of provisions, and a face sour enough to turn the cream she carries. Down she plumps it on the small table.

"Thank you, Hepzibah," I venture meekly. "I don't want any tea."

"Your ma says you *are* to," she responds with asperity.

"I cannot. I am not hungry."

"That comes from stayin' out when you ought to be in at your meals," snaps the vinegrous damsel.

"Take it away again, please," I say.

She flounces about, muttering something that sounds like "people's tempers," and then departs without the tray.

I put it outside myself, lock my door, and retire to bed. When I awake in the morning I am oppressed with a sense that some misfortune has befallen me; but it takes me some time to call to mind what my woes are. I dress myself, feeling cross and irritable, a frame of mind which I must say is not habitual to me.

During breakfast I keep silence, and as it is a wet morning, betake myself when it is finished into the drawing-room with a book. My sisters are there, of course, but we do not exchange any conversation.

Presently Julia looks up, saying, imperatively:

"Doris, go and fetch me the ink."

Generally speaking, with me to hear is to obey, but to-day I am out of temper, and feel irritated against my sisters. I make

no reply, though my heart beats rather fast as I resolve on daring to brave them.

"Do you hear?" says Julia again.

"Yes," I answer, getting rather red.

"Then perhaps you will get it."

"No, I shall not," I retort, defiantly; and this time any one might hear the loud beats of my heart against my side.

My three sisters look up aghast at my rebellion.

"Upon my word!" says Fanny.

"You disagreeable little wretch!" cries Julia.

"I shall tell papa of you," adds Anna.

My eyes are flashing, my cheeks scarlet, as I cry:

"Why should I wait upon any of you? You don't order each other about, and why should you me?" (I am speaking too fast to concern myself with elegance of phraseology.) "It's a shame. I have to wear your old clothes, and fetch and carry for you, and then you go and make mischief, and try to set papa and mamma against me."

"Oh, you little fury!" cries Fanny.

"It's quite true," I retort, "and you know it is. I won't bear it any longer!" and finding my position begin to get untenable, I make good my retreat from the room, followed by a shower of words from my sisters.

The rain has ceased. I feel the house unbearable, and resolve to go and see old Gideon Hay. For many years he was a faithful servant of the family, but now, superannuated, lives in a little cottage some half a mile distant. We have a great mutual affection, the old man and I; my visits to his cottage are of the most frequent.

Bearing with me a basket of new-laid eggs as an offering, I betake myself to Exhibition Cottage, as Mr. Hay has named his residence, in consequence of a profound impression produced on his mind by a visit to the exhibition of 1851. Nimbly I trip along the road, though my heart is still heavy with the consciousness that I have made myself unmitigatedly and unnecessarily disagreeable. I wish now I had fetched the ink for Julia, and am half tempted to go back and make my peace. I certainly will express my contrition on my return, and in the course of my walk I added several paving-stones to a place that shall be nameless.

Mr. Hay is in his garden picking up slugs, which does not prevent me from offering my hand, though I am not sorry when he respectfully declines it.

"You see, miss, my dear" (so he always combines his affection and respect for me, good old servant that he is), "the slugs do come out in bodies after a shower o' rain, an' there's no keepin' of 'em under, unless I comes myself, an' attends to 'em—though, if I'd a-knowed I should see your pretty face here this morning, I'd sent 'em all to Jockey Baker before you should ha' caught me this figure, an' my hands all of a muck."

"I'm sure you need not mind me, Hay," I say; "but it can't be good for your rheumatism to be stooping about in the damp."

"Well, it is back-breaking work, missy, I do confess; but, bless you! I shouldn't have a cabbage nor a brocklow, nor nothing else, for them varmint, if I didn't have a day's hunt now and then."

"I'll help you," I say; though I don't think any one ever loathed the insect creation (are slugs insects, by the way?) more than I. But I have a stout pair of dogskin gloves, and plucking a cabbage-leaf, valiantly begin a crusade after the nasty slimy things.

"Now, miss, my dear, don't you go for to sile your pretty fingers with such muck," remonstrates Hay; but I continue vigorously my disgusting employment—all the more resolutely that I feel some penance necessary after my ill-humor.

Between us we make a great raid upon our molluscous foes. I am getting very hot and red with stooping, when I hear a horse's hoof outside the gate. Hay and I look up simultaneously, to see a handsome man on a fine bay horse watching us with an amused smile from the road. He reins in his horse, and Hay goes respectfully forward.

"I say, Hay," he commences, "can you tell me what's become of Jim Hatton, who used to live down in Banks' cottages. One of my men is taken bad, and I thought if he hadn't a job he might do for us."

"I haven't set eyes on Jim not this three months, sir," Hay replies. "I'm sure I don't know what's become of him; but I could go round an' ask, if you pleased, sir."

"Oh! no, thank you, I won't give you the trouble," rejoins the stranger; and I look up and go forward, with some degree of shyness, for, by a strange coincidence, I have seen Jim Hatton this very morning in our own yard, and heard him ask papa for a job.

"Jim Hatton is at home again," I say, getting very red, as is my wont; "and—and I know he will be very glad of work."

"Thank you so much," says the stranger, who has taken his hat off at my approach; and though I do not admire fair men as a rule, I am bound to admit that this one is very good-looking. "Where can I find him, do you think?"

"If you wouldn't mine calling at home, they would be sure to know," I answer, about to retire.

"Will you tell me where home is?" he asks, with the cheeriest of smiles.

"Halling Farm—half a mile further up the road."

"Thanks. I know Halling Farm very well," he says; and, raising his hat to me, nodding to Hay, he rides off."

"Now, that's a *real* gentleman, that is," ejaculates Hay, with enthusiasm, as soon as the stranger is out of hearing.

"Who is he?" I inquire.

"Lor', miss, my dear, don't you know? Why, that's Mr. Carruthers."

I stoop hastily after an imaginary slug, for I don't care to expose my countenance at this moment to Hay's inspection. But I see a great field opening before me. I shall be able to talk of my hero, and Hay will give me information about the family.

"Oh! that's Mr. Carruthers, is it?" I say, recovering myself, and looking up.

"Yes, missy; and he's the kindest-hearted, liberalest gentleman in these parts. All his people dotes on him, they do."

I feel jealous, for his brother's sake, and say slightingly:

"People can afford to be liberal when they are rich. I suppose he *is* very rich?"

"Yes; he be that; but little your innocent heart knows of the ways o' the world, if you think them as is richest is liberalest. I've knowed of lords and markisses as was that rich they couldn't count their wealth, as 'ud do anything mean to save a sixpence."

"How old is Mr. Carruthers?" I ask.

"Well, let me calc'late," says Hay, assisting memory by planting his digits in his sparse gray hair. "He come of age two years afore the exhibition—well, that makes him thirty-three. An' a handsome young chap he was, to be sure, goin' about shakin' hands with every one so free—not a grain o' pride about him—and seein' as every one had their fill of all the good things. A proud woman his poor mother was that day."

These reminiscences provoke me. I don't want to hear anything in favor of the elder Mr. Carruthers. I ask if he has any brothers?

"Yes; one," says Hay, "but he's a poor chap compared to the squire. A stuck-up, dissatisfied sort o' fine gentleman, as doesn't care two peas for no one 'cept himself."

I am about to utter a furious denegation of this last statement, when fortunately I remember myself. But, fearful of hearing anything more to his detraction, I say hastily:

"I must run away, for it will be getting near our dinner-time."

"Well, miss, my dear, I mustn't keep you," says Hay, "though it's loath I am to part with your pretty face" (I think he thinks every one pretty who is young). "We've got a fine crop of slugs between us, and I'm sure I thank ye hearty for the help you've give me."

"Good-bye, Hay," shaking him by the hand (I may as well now, for we're all sluggy together); but I go away feeling less respect and affection for that faithful old retainer of the Keane family than is my general wont.

I hasten back to be in time for dinner, expecting to incur much wrath from my sisters after my rebellion of the morning; but, lo! they come out in a body to meet me, seeming quite to have forgotten the little unpleasantness between us. Soon I discover the cause. Mr. Carruthers has been here after Jim Hatton, has mentioned his meeting with me, and my sisters are wild to know where I saw him, what *he* said, what *I* said, etc. I think they would all have gone slug-hunting for a week with poor old Hay for such a chance as I have had, and which, of course, is completely thrown away upon me.

"I wonder if he would bow to you if you met him?" says Fanny. "Perhaps he might stop and speak, and then you might introduce him to us."

At dinner Julia and Fanny propose taking me into Colton to see about buying me a new dress. I know what it means—namely, that we are to perambulate the High Street in pursuance of Mr. Carruthers of Southcote.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

### GALL IN THE HONEY.

"I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers,
And everything but sleep.
We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure."

I MAKE no opposition; little thought have I of going to the woods to look for the fairy tales or my hero. It is a moral certainty to me that he will not be there; and the green arcades, the ferny swards, wild flowers, and steel-blue lakelet have lost their own intrinsic charm for me.

I am content to be promenaded through Colton, though I have resolved in my own mind that if I meet Mr. Carruthers twenty times I will do nothing so forward as to look at him expectant of a salutation. "Likely," I say to myself, "that he will notice a little cotton-gowned slug picker, or even remember for a moment that it was I who gave him the needed information." How little we know what is to happen to us!

Twice we have walked down and once up the High Street, when at a little distance on the opposite side I see Wilfred Carruthers sauntering slowly toward us. My heart leaps into my mouth, my knees literally knock together, and an awful fear seizes me lest my sisters shall notice my confusion. Will he look at me?—will he bow to me? Shall I turn my head the other way? Now he is there in front of me I feel inclined to risk everything only to be noticed by him. He saunters toward us. For an instant his look seems to sweep over me. I crimson to the eyes; but he walks on without the slightest sign, and I cannot even be sure he has seen me.

"Who is that?" Fanny asks of Julia. "What a handsome man!"

And Julia answers:

"I don't know. One of the officers, I suppose."

They are in front of me. A sudden wild feeling comes across me that I must win one look from him. Dare I? I glanced round me with a terrified look; my heart beats so thick and fast I am almost choked, and then while my sisters, absorbed in conversation, continue their way, I turn and dart down the street. It is agony to me to venture this rash pursuit: every feeling of modesty quails within me; but I feel as if my life depends on one glance from him. I only mean just to pass before him—one glance is all I ask.

At this moment a low phaeton with a pair of splendid ponies

comes rattling up the street; they pull up short in front of Wilfred; I see him hasten forward and stretch an eager hand to the lady who is driving, and I look up at her. She is young, she is beautiful, and she is dressed in the perfection of elegance. My eager eyes take everything in at a glance; the exquisite amplitude of lace and muslin, the soft white feathers curling over her golden plaits, the pearl-colored gloves, and thick gold bracelets. She smiles, and *his* face is radiant—he seems to devour her with his eyes. A numbness creeps over her heart; hastily I turn and look for a moment in a shop window. My eyes are full of tears, I feel that my face is telling plainly of my anguish, and when I dare to look up my sisters are coming toward me.

"Why don't you keep with us?" Fanny says, crossly.

And then they are taken up in contemplating the group opposite.

"How lovely she looks to-day! I wonder who he is? He seems to be very much in love with her. What an exquisite blue her dress is! How well that pink rose looks in her hat!"

All my sisters' remarks are jumbled together in my ears as they stand beside me, feigning to look into the shop, but glancing furtively at the lady in the pony-carriage.

As we turn to go away I cast one desperate look at Wilfred Carruthers—my eyes meet his, but there is no recognition in his glance, and I walk on with a feeling of shame and misery gnawing at my poor foolish heart. As if he would look at me, a poor, little insignificant, ill-clothed rustic, when he moves among beautiful, elegant women such as she.

"Oh! you miserable little idiot!" I say to myself, trying to lash up a rage that will drown my pain. "You poor, benighted, ignorant simpleton, to think a man like that could be anything to you, or you to him!"

Mechanically I go shopping with my sisters—they forget that they came into Colton to buy a dress for me, and I do not care to remind them. If I might choose a garb for the rest of my days, it would be sackcloth and ashes—the loveliest fabrics of gauze and silk, dyed to the fairest hues of azure and rose, would not inspire envy or desire in me to-day.

They finish at last as the great clock booms out six, and we betake ourselves in the direction of the Hand and Flowers, where our equipage is always put up. The old piebald pony is harnessed to the little basket-carriage, Fanny takes the reins, Julia jumps up beside her, and I get in behind. We turn out of the yard just as a great clatter of horses' hoofs makes itself heard. Involuntarily I look up and see a team going by; as I raise my eyes to the holder of the ribbons, he takes off his hat profoundly. It is Mr. Carruthers.

My sisters looked around quite flushed and excited.

"Was that to you? Did you see him? Did you bow?" they cry, in a breath.

I remember, with shame, that I was too much taken by surprise to acknowledge the salutation.

"How stupid you are!" Fanny says, indignantly, and I feel a

weary kind of conviction that I am a poor, silly, miserable creature, fit for nothing in the world.

Forlorn, I sit on my little seat as we jog-trot past the old-fashioned gable-roofed houses, and then out into the lanes toward home. All my sisters say strikes plainly on my ear, though I make no effort to listen.

Mr. Carruthers—the officers—the dresses at Loveridge's—the dean's wife. Then comes something that I do not listen to.

"They say she is a tremendous flirt," begins Fanny.

"Who?" asks Julia.

"Why, Lady Cecil."

"Oh! I should think she is, by the way she was going on with that man. I wonder how Sir Marmaduke likes it?"

"I don't suppose he minds. They say all he cares for is a good dinner."

A sense of relief comes over me. She is married then, this beautiful creature, so of course she and Mr. Carruthers can't possibly be in love with each other. I am still at that age of ignorance and simplicity when one believes that the fact of a woman's having a husband secures her from all but the friendly interest of the rest of mankind.

I should not feel so miserable now but for the thought that he has seen without seeming to recognize me. Was he ashamed of me? His brother had bowed to me, even though Lord Elsleigh was sitting by his side! No, I tell myself, miserably—it is my folly of the day before that has disgusted him—that alone is the reason of his refraining from any notice of me.

We reach home, sit down to tea, stroll out in the lanes afterward, and get through the evening somehow. I pace in solitude up and down the long alley of currant-bushes in the kitchen-garden, feeling desperately unhappy. I seem to have lived one day of bliss (I magnify that first meeting with Wilfred Carruthers into unutterable bliss, forgetful of the confusion, the stained fingers and gingham umbrella, that went to mar its perfect beautitude), and now I feel as if my life was gone—has slipped from me forever, and the rest of my days are to be barren, blank, and void.

So it is with children; they are supremely exultant or supremely miserable—life is to them all *couleur de rose*, or one vast black unfathomable abyss. It is said childhood is the happiest time; perhaps because those who say so are past it, and have forgotten so much of it. The past *was* happier, we say; the future *will be* happier, we hope, only this present time is so full of pains and cares.

I work myself to such a pitch of misery that if I only knew how to compass it, should like to go and fling myself at the feet of Wilfred Carruthers, and beseech him to give me one kind look. I imagine fantastic pictures in my poor deluded brain—of how I would like to trail myself at his feet and die, hearing him implore me with tardy repentance to live for his sake. But it would be too late. I should insist upon then and there breathing my last without even looking one glance of reproach on him for his cruelty—could I but play Elaine to his Launcelot! Alas,

in these prosaic days, no one dies for love—and the Keanes are an exceptionally robust family. Real suffering comes surely enough in after life, but I doubt if the bitter anguish of our childish hearts over some imaginary grief is ever exceeded. I go to bed, and rise on the morrow, still heavy at heart, and all day long I move about, not with blithe, cheery voice, trolling noisy ditties up and down the house, and flying in and out the rooms, as is my wont—but sad, heavy, listless. Fortunately, occupation is provided for me. I am set to prepare baskets of fruit for preserving, and then Anna wants a frill hemmed for the muslin she is to wear at a small dance to-night.

In the evening, papa and mamma are taking a stroll; the boys are in Colton; and as the twilight creeps on, I steal into our bay-windowed drawing-room, and sit down to the piano. I sing all the plaintive little ditties I can call to mind, and set pathetic verses to sad, tender music, until the knot rises in my throat, tears swell in my voice, and I am fain to close the piano. Rising, I lean my arms on the ledge of the open window, looking up to the dark blue heaven, and feeling that intense yearning after happiness that every human heart must experience sometimes. I have not yet come to the knowledge that, whatever appearance seems to say, suffering and sorrow come alike to every heir of our first parents' curse. I say to myself, Lady Cecil must be as happy as the princess in a fairy tale, with her beauty, her wealth, her jewels, and such friends as Wilfred Carruthers; and I—oh! I don't think any one was ever more miserable or unhappy than I am.

Three days pass without my venturing near the Southcote Woods. *Cui bono*, as Harry, proud of his Latin, says grandiosely on all occasions when it can be effectively introduced. I find no pleasure now in the solitude that was wont to be so sweet to me; my thoughts, dreams, fairy tales are empty of satisfaction for me now that I have begun my own life. I can no longer suffer for the pains of my puppets, nor rejoice in their joys. *I* am the heroine of an all-absorbing romance; my tears and laughter are all selfish now.

The fourth day is Sunday. We have tea an hour earlier, and afterward I slip away, feeling that I must visit the once dear haunt again. The brief happy dream is over, of course. Never more shall I sit with my Greek hero under the green shelter of the big trees, nor see his dreamy gaze bent tenderly on my face. "That is past, but I can shut my eyes and think of him," I say desperately to myself; and that poor comfort I must and will have. So, with lingering feet, I tread the hard-beaten track through the corn-fields, stopping now and again to pluck poppies and corn-flowers and daisies, mixing them with wheat ears.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OPHELIA'S WREATH.

"I was (unhandsome wrangler as I am)
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul,
But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,
And he's indicted falsely."

THE evening is delicious, full of sunshine, of airs balmy, from heaven; and as, strolling up into the woods, I see the long lines of red sunlight flickering warm through leaf-clustered branches, and falling on patches of green fern and velvet moss, I am filled with a glad sense of beauty.

The world is still lovely, though the hearts of the poor dwellers therein are troubled and sad. I do not stop by my steel-blue lake, nor the hollow oak, but wander a long way further, climbing to a great open spot where one can see the country for miles round. The trees cease here on this side, and a great turfy sward descends steeply several hundred feet into a valley through which the narrowed river flows scarce wider than a trout stream. Beyond are fields and fields of corn, with here and there meadow lands, and a patch of red fallow fields. I can see two or three houses surrounded by trees belonging to neighboring grandees, and bounding the red horizon, a range of distant hills. Under a clump of beeches I sit down, pulling off my straw hat, and letting the red reflex of the sun play warmly on my face. Sad am I, and sentimentally inclined as I look at my lap full of flowers, and bethink me of a picture of Ophelia exhibited in Colton last spring. I will be Ophelia, though Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, was fair and slightly mad, with neither of which attributes can I invest Mr. Wilfred Carruthers. But I will be Ophelia without a Hamlet, and my deft fingers swiftly weave a wreath of red poppies and blue corn-flowers mixed with dasies and wheat ears, and long hanks of bright grass. Then child-like I pull the pins from my hair, letting it tumble heavy and curly over my shoulders. When the wreath is twined among my locks, I feel the want of a looking-glass to see if I am really like the picture; but soon forgetting even that want, I wander off into one of my habitual trains of thought. Suddenly voices quite close at hand arouse me, and with a kind of terror I look round to see four or five gentlemen coming toward me, smoking and talking. In my consternation I forget the head-gear, with which I have idiotically adorned myself, and catching up my hat by the string, prepare for flight, more shy than ever, now I recognize Mr. Carruthers and his brother. The other gentlemen are strangers. For a moment I stand like some wild animal at bay. I cannot escape without passing them, but before I have time to think Mr. Carruthers comes up to me, putting out his hand.

"How do you do, Miss Keane? I am so glad you make use of these woods. What a lovely evening!"

And I stammer "Yes," in unutterable confusion, feeling the most rustic, shy, ill-bred simpleton in the world. The other

men pass on—Wilfred, without one glance, the strangers with a stare and smile.

All at once I remember my Ophelian wreath, and put up my hands to tear the badge of folly from my tangled locks. Never was fool more ashamed of cap and bells than I of my flower crown. With ruthless fingers I tear at it, heedless of pulling out great meshes of hair, until Mr. Carruthers cries in a tone as if the hair were his, not mine:

"Oh! don't—pray don't! You must not tear at it like that—let me do it for you if you will have it off, but it looks so pretty."

But I am beside myself with shame, and also with pain at Wilfred's indifference. I feel that my eyes are full of tears, and I am indignant with his brother for noticing me at all. He picks up the disgraced garland, and disentangles gently from it a cluster of shining threads, while I stand looking helplessly on.

"How could you be so cruel!" he says, almost reproachfully.

And I mutter:

"It doesn't matter."

I want to run away without being rude, and he, seeing my anxiety to be gone, says:

"I am so sorry we disturbed you. I can't bear the thought of frightening you away. Do stop here, we are going."

At this moment I see the others returning.

"I must go," I say, and hurry off to lose myself in a turn of the wood. A moment after I hear swift footsteps, but do not look round.

"Miss Doris," says a voice close at my ear, and my heart gives a great bound, for it is *his* voice.

"You dropped this."

And Wilfred Carruthers shows me a black rosette from one of my shoes.

"Oh! thank you," I respond mechanically.

"Will you come to the hollow oak at five to-morrow?" he whispers, with a tender look from his beautiful eyes, and before I can answer he is gone again, and I fly on, for I hear the sound of laughing voices behind me.

"Will I go to the hollow oak?" Will I not do any mortal thing that the sovereign lord of my heart deigns to command? And I run on, my feet scarcely seeming to touch the ground, in such a heaven of ecstasy are my senses rapt.

He is *not* angry—I have *not* lost him forever—oh! supremely blissful thought, and straightway the world that was a vale of tears and tribulation an hour ago, becomes a paradise of pure felicity.

I begin to love my neighbor as myself—my heart is filled with genuine charity and affection, even to cross Hepzibah, who is more unbearable than usual this evening. I should like to embrace everybody all round, but the fulfillment of my aspirations is confined to Fred, the other members of my family not seeming appreciative of my affectionate mood. One thought alone troubles my repose. What if it should be wet to-morrow—and papa has been tapping the glass, and ominously pronouncing it

to be going down. I ask, trying to seem indifferent, if the barometer is ever known to be wrong; but papa is a firm believer, and will not admit its fallibility.

In spite of the glass, the morrow dawns fair and hot. At five o'clock I am hastening through the wood to the hollow oak. No waiting this time; already in the distance I see the tall form of Wilfred Carruthers leaning against its trunk, and as I approach, he comes forward to meet me. I am in great trepidation about the mode of my reception, but his manner is very kind and very cold; he scarcely more than touches my hand.

"Here is your book at last," he says. "Have you been often to look for it?"

"No," I answer, truthfully, "not once."

"Do you not want it, then?" he asks, with a slight elevation of the brows.

"Oh! yes," I answer hastily; "but——"

"But what?"

"I felt sure you would not bring it."

"Why?—since I promised?" he asks.

"Be—because I thought I had displeased you," I stammer.

"My dear child," says my hero, with a look almost of pity, as he gazes down at me from the altitude of his superior height and wisdom, "I see you do not understand me yet. Why should I be angry? Suppose"—and he bends toward me while I look eagerly up to catch every note of the harmonious voice—"suppose, for instance, that in these very woods I came suddenly across what seemed to me a little fair, fresh, innocent wild-flower of a new and different sort from what I ever met before; I stoop to take it to my heart, and then I find it is not the rare flower I fancied, but one just like a host of others that I have seen and plucked a hundred times. Do you think I should be angry with the flower? or, rather, should I not leave it and go on my way, disappointed at my own faulty discernment?"

My eyes are bent now on a tuft of fern, which they see but dimly for the mist that comes across them. I have read the cruel allegory, and am wounded to the quick by it.

"You see, my child," he says, very kindly, not in the least as if he meant to pain me, "I am not angry with you; it would be most unfair."

That is another stab. I am half wrathful, and say:

"I am only a village rustic; you cannot expect me to be like your elegant, aristocratic ladies, like Lady Cecil," I cry, for I have some spirit, and not tact enough to conceal the bitterness rankling within me.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HEARTSTRINGS.

"Oh! love were little worth, were he not blind,
And deaf to caviling thoughts unkind,
Dumb to reproach, conscious of but one pain—
The anguish lest he waste himself in vain."

HE makes no answer, and I say:

"I saw you in Colton with her, and you did not even look at me."

"Indeed!" with cold politeness. "Pray accept my best apologies."

I am terrified by his manner, and look up quickly, but he is gazing away into the distance with a slight curl on his lip. There is silence between us for several minutes; then, eager to mollify him, I say, sorely against the grain:

"Lady Celia is very beautiful."

"You think so?" he responds, still coldly polite.

"How could she have married that old Sir Marmaduke?" I begin again after another pause.

"It would not be difficult to find a great many reasons," answers Mr. Carruthers.

"He is old enough to be her father," I venture.

"Her grandfather even," says my companion.

"Then don't you think that dreadful?" I ask, eagerly looking up in his face.

"*C'est selon*," he replies with a shrug. "It is not dreadful if Lady Cecil feels no repugnance to a man more than three times her age, or if she can conquer her repugnance sufficiently to take advantage of the wealth, position and luxury a marriage with him offers her."

I look at him incredulously; I don't believe those to be the real sentiments of my hero. He sees the look, and with a smile throws himself down beside me.

"How could anything make her happy if she does not love him?" I asked, indignantly.

"You are very young, Miss Doris," says Mr. Carruthers, with a smile in his eyes and lips, "and you know nothing at all about the world in which we live, except geographically, perhaps, from what they taught you at school. You know that it is round, like an orange, that it is divided into so many parts, and the parts into so many countries, that there are so many seas, so many mountains, so many rivers, so many capital towns; but of the beings, red, white, and black who inhabit it, their wants and necessities, their passions and desires, the feelings that govern them, you are as yet in a state of profound and blissful ignorance. Happy you if you could always remain so! You see, though all mankind is made much after the same pattern, their wants and natures vary considerably—for instance, the savage wants his bow and arrow, his tattooed squaw to wait on him, the scalps of his enemies, and an occasional dish of boiled missionary, to make him happy; the student is placed in a seventh heaven

by a shelf full of musty old books; a monk asks no more than his beads, the little finger bone of a saint, and his scourge. Lady Cecil thinks it the height of bliss to be covered with diamonds, to drive the finest horses, to be the bosom friend of duchesses; and you—your wants are so simple that you would be content to live in a tumble-down cottage, so only it had roses and jasmine training over it, and administer curds and whey to the hero of your worship."

I looked in his face with a smile and a blush. I like to hear him talk—all he says sounds so supremely clever in my attentive ears.

"You still believe in love and roses and strawberries and cream, don't you?" he asks me in a voice half caressing, half mocking. "Ah! you won't when you are as old as I am," he adds, with something like a sigh.

I begin to feel more at home with him, and take courage to say:

"You seem to know what would make every one else happy. Won't you tell me what you care most about?"

He looks up at me with profound sadness in his dark blue eyes.

"Ah! child, you ask me a question very hard to answer. What I care about? I scarcely know. There are few things now that can awaken even a common interest in me, much less the enthusiasm that is necessary to make one *care about* anything."

"But you are not very old?" I venture.

"I am older than many a man of fifty, little Doris," says Wilfred Carruthers. "Look at me. Do I look like a man who has any of the feelings or impulses of youth left in him? You know your Bible very well, I dare say—of course you do. Well, I am like King Solomon; not in his riches or power or wisdom, *bien entendu*, but I have given my heart to search out happiness, and have found only vanity and vexation of spirit. I have tried his distractions, in a modified form, according to the manners of the period; that is to say, I have mixed with the great, the rich, the beautiful; I have dabbled in art, kept race-horses, given myself up to the fascinations of the dancing-girls and the exhilarating influence of nectar fit for Olympian gods; and behold me here at two and thirty, sated, *blase*, world-worn, almost incapable of an emotion except that of being intensely bored, and I suppose one can hardly call that an emotion. I envy you, Miss Doris, with your freshness of feeling, your capacity for enjoying and suffering."

"Suffering!" I echo.

"Yes; there is a luxury even in that. Do you know I envied you the other day as I watched you in the supreme *abandon* of your fancied sorrow; it gave me the idea of such intense vitality."

I turn away, vexed at his recalling the folly I am so bitterly ashamed of, but he goes on ruthlessly:

"It made me think what an intense capability for enjoyment you must possess, too, and what a trifle it would take to send you into the seventh heaven."

"You must think me very silly," I say, almost ready to cry with vexation, for he makes me feel such a very little child—a poor irrational being with no sense or discrimination.

"Silly? Child," he answers, with a tender inflection of his voice, "the people who are capable of being soonest made happy are the wisest, to my way of thinking."

"Little things please little minds," I retort, and am then suddenly filled with horror at my own vulgarity.

"I think," says my hero presently, looking far beyond me into a spirit-world of his own, down somewhere through the green vistas—"I think the only thing that could give me happiness now would be the intense love of a fresh, young heart, that would take me for its master, its life—its all in all. One that I could play on as the strings of a fine instrument, that would give forth pathos, tenderness, grief, or rapture, at my touch—eyes in whose deep wells I read the soul speaking clear and true, and lips never tired of breathing 'I love you.'"

A great trembling eagerness seizes me as he speaks, to be this heart, these eyes, these lips to him—to take him for my master, my all in all; then I shrink back within myself, abashed at my own temerity. I, a little, simple, ignorant girl aspiring to be the ideal of such a being as Wilfred Carruthers! There is a long silence, and then he turns and looks at me—my eyes meet his, and sink away with sudden confusion. He stretches a hand out for mine, and I give it, trembling exceedingly, my heart fluttering with the old unconquerable terror.

He lets my hand fall.

"Poor little frightened dove!" he says, in the low, mocking voice that I dread. "It cannot bear the coarseness of mortal touch after its ethereal dreams of fairy lovers."

Crimson, confused, ashamed, I sit with face averted. I may have made up my mind a thousand times to all I will do and suffer, so as not to hurt and vex him; but when it comes to the point my old shyness and fear hang like lead upon me, and I *can* be no different.

"I can't help it!" I say, desperately; "it's no use."

"Alas! for the fine instrument that I have imagined," he says, half bitter, half jesting, "that jangles discord when I would fain draw sweet music from it!"

I am beginning to hate his allegorical mode of speech, that I thought so musical and exquisite at first—it always conveys a stab for me.

"Then why do you speak to me? why do you have anything to do with me?" I cry, with sudden access of passion, "if everything I say and do disgusts and disappoints you?"

"You neither disgust nor disappoint me, my child," he replies, caressingly. "You are such a dear, sweet little thing that I want you to be dearer and sweeter still."

I look up at these soft words with wondering delight.

"If you were not something different—something better to me than most of the world, do you think I should care to take the trouble of coming out here to see you, and leaving all kinds of gay parties for your sake?"

A great sense of happiness overshadows me. I can find no words.

"Some day you will know me better than to tremble at my touch," continues Wilfred Carruthers. "There's a verse in your Bible that says, 'Perfect love casteth out fear,' isn't there?"

"Yes," I say, nodding my head.

"I must go now," rising and stretching out his hands to raise me. Then for a moment we stand together, he still holding me fast, and gazing intently into my face. I dare not look up—I tremble and grow red, experiencing a sense of positive torture; then at last, like the unhappy bird fascinated by a snake, my eyes turn suddenly to his. He is laughing.

"Good-bye, *belle ingenue!*" he says, releasing me, and I stand feeling foolish and mortified, while he turns and takes his way up through the woods toward the park.

And he is gone, without saying a word of seeing me again, and though he piques and frightens me, and makes me feel foolish and ashamed nearly all the time I am with him, I know that I am utterly, miserably, desperately dependent on his presence for all the happiness I am ever to know again in this world. I cannot understand him—does he like me a little, or is he only laughing at me? That last thought holds the very gall of bitterness.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### JACK'S CASTLE.

"All sounds were in harmony blended,
Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks in the farmyard:
Whirr of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing of pigeons,
All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love, and the great sun
Looked with the eye of love through the golden vapors around him."

I FIND Jack at home, to my great delight. Having had business in Colton, he has come in for an hour on the way home.

"I say, Cissy," he begins, "these things are bothering me to have them over for the day next week when I get my corn in, so I've been obliged to give in."

"Why, Jack, you ought only to feel too flattered, I'm sure," says Fanny.

"Oh! I am," responds Jack ironically.

"Now, Jack, couldn't you ask a few men in the evening, and we might get up a little dance," pleads Anna.

"A few of the officers from Colton," suggests Jack, with heavy raillery.

"Perhaps Mr. Carruthers 'ud drive 'em over on his drag," guffaws Harry.

"No, but Jack," interposes Julia, "you might ask two or three men."

"Well, where I'm to get them from, unless you'd like a few of the reapers in, I don't know," replies Jack.

"Nonsense," cries Fanny. "You've got two or three men in the neighborhood, and though they're not much, they're better than no one."

"Oh! no doubt, if I tell them my elegant sisters are coming, and will condescend to notice them, they'll fly and leave their harvest and everything else."

"Have in Billy Simmons, Jack," cries Harry. "Fan thinks he's spoony on her; I heard her tell Ju so, because he was at our church the Sunday before last."

"You rude boy!" utters Fanny, indignantly. "Hold your tongue directly."

"Well, Cissy, are you game to come this time?" asks Jack, turning to me.

I push his leg under the table imploringly, afraid lest he should let out about the last invitation.

"Oh! yes, Jack, I should like it above all things," I say.

"But she can't," exclaims Anna, "there won't be room in the pony carriage."

"Oh, I'll settle that," answers Jack. "I have to go into Colton on Wednesday, and I'll come in here and take her along with me, and you can come over on Thursday. Fred and Harry can walk, and I'll manage to send them and Cis back in my dog-cart."

So it is finally arranged; and though Wilfred Carruthers should appoint to meet me on that very day, go I must; for I would not offend my dear good brother for the world.

But nothing happens to deter me even from the wish to go, for neither the next day nor the next is there any sign of my hero, though I brave the scorching afternoon sun to watch for him in the woods. Wednesday comes bright and hot. The glass is at set fair now, and Jack comes to fetch me. I prevail on him to stay until quite late, for I dearly love a moonlight drive; and as we are wishing every one at home good-bye, the half-hour after nine strikes. I spring up into the high dog-cart one side as Jack mounts the other, for his black mare is impatient to be gone, and gives the man all his work to hold her.

"Good-bye, every one," and with a dart forward the mare is off within a very narrow shave of taking one of the gate-posts with her. Off we go at a spanking trot through the warm scented air, along the hard white road.

The moon is up, and throws great gaunt shadows across our way, giving the mare every opportunity of shying if she feels disposed; but I am at that happy age when nerves don't trouble me, and if I were the most timid creature in the world I don't think I could know fear with my big brother beside me.

I give myself up to the enjoyment of the hour, hugging myself into Jack's pocket, as he lovingly bids me do, while he puts out a strong arm now and then to draw me yet closer.

Only one thing interferes with my perfect enjoyment—the thought that our drive will soon be over, at the brisk pace we are traveling; but the quick motion is delightful, and I am not going to spoil my pleasure by anticipatory regrets. How we scud along! the white mile-stones seem to have been moved nearer together since last I passed them. Eight miles, seven, six, five, four, alas! A heavy dew is falling, and a strong, delicious scent rises from the stubble fields where the corn has just

been cut. The cows are enjoying their peaceful slumbers in the big green meadows; and so are the villagers, apparently, as we pass through the hamlets, where not one glimmer is to be seen through the latticed windows.

We come to a piece of water running across the road called the Splash, and the mare stops a moment to drink. The moon shines on the water and reflects us. I remember every feature of that delicious drive to this very day. On we go again, past the hedge-rows full of honeysuckle, past the gaunt white windmills that put me in mind of Don Quixote de la Mancha; and then we come to the dear, tumble-down white house, covered with roses, red, white, and yellow, that is Jack's Castle. The lattice windows glitter in the moonlight through their frames of dark-leaved, white-starred clematis; the dogs, Nettle, Dandy and Growler, rush out with a joyful chorus of welcome; old Billy, the groom, hobbles up; Mrs. Bateson, the housekeeper, appears at the door—and here we are at home. We go into the parlor, which has a nice farm-housy smell with a faint *soupcon* of tobacco smoke, and Jack and I sit down to the refection that has been prepared for us. There is cold pie and cucumber, fresh lettuces and a great dish of strawberries, with a jug of cream you may almost make the spoon stand upright in; and we set to, undisturbed by any thought of consequent nightmare or troubled slumbers. Then Jack lights his pipe, while I sit on his knee, and we have the most delicious "coze" together on this my first night under his roof-tree. It is nearly twelve o'clock when he performs the office of major-domo, and lights me to my apartment, three times as big as my own, and tells me, with a kiss and a laugh, not to lose myself in the great dimity-curtained couch.

Next morning I awake early, and hear the birds' vociferous chant through the open window, and see the slanting sun-rays pouring across the strips of carpet. Up I jump, and put my head out. Oh! how I wish our house was like this! Close up comes a great hedge, twenty feet high, of acacia and lilac, laburnum and hawthorn, growing out of a forest of evergreen; and a pretty garden lies below, with weeping ashes and wild cherry-trees, divided by a haha from the meadow where the sleek cattle are grazing.

Chanticleer is jubilant. Mesdames Chanticleer loudly announce that we may expect new-laid eggs for breakfast. I can hear old Billy s-s-shing as he cleans the harness, and Mrs. Bateson shrilly apostrophizing Molly the girl. Presently a step crunches the gravel, and Jack, issuing from the door, looks up at my window.

"Oh! you are awake then, Cis. Come down, there's a pet, and I'll take you round the yard before breakfast."

Thus urged, I waste no time, and before very long am hanging on his arm, inspecting eagerly the new acquisitions since my last visit. Then we go in well appetized for our morning meal, and I have the delicious satisfaction of making tea for Jack the first time in my life.

"Oh! you dear thing!" I cry, enthusiastically, for I have put

away Wilfred Carruthers for the time being, and am giving my sole attention to my brother. "I wish I lived with you always."

"So do I, my pet," says Jack, heartily; "and so you shall some day, when I see how things are likely to work."

"But you *are* getting on, dear," I say, with sedate interest.

"Like a house on fire so far; but it doesn't do to launch out all at once, you know, Cis; and farming's a desperate uncertain game."

"Oh! I know you'll get on, Jack," I exclaim, confidently; "and then you'll be getting married, and I shall hate your wife so!" (the last sentence with real gusto).

"Ha! ha!" laughs Jack—"never fear, Cis. There's no chance of your little nose being put out of joint yet awhile. Why, you'll be married and settled yourself long before that, I hope, and I promise not to hate my brother-in-law, if he's a good fellow."

Why does a ridiculous thought come across me that Jack and Wilfred Carruthers would never get on? as if that grand individual would ever in his wildest moments think of taking to wife a little insignificant nobody like me!

"Jack," I commence presently, in a deprecating tone, "would you mind *very* much if I were to put your things straight this morning?"

"No, dear," he responds; "I shall be much obliged, as long as you won't poke things away where I can't find them, like that stupid old Bateson. And I tell you what, Cis, if you'll set your handy little fingers to work at my fishing-tackle, as you used, you'll be doing me a real service."

"All right, Jack; I'll begin at once." And he lights his pipe and goes off, leaving me with the dogs, for they won't even follow their master when I'm there, such affectionate remembrance have they of my good offices when they resided at Halling Farm.

First of all, I have a good look round, and take a general survey of the room. The furniture is very old and dark; it has been handsome, and the sideboard and chairs are ornamented with carved brass. Hunting sketches adorn the wall, but these are modern and oak-framed. A small mahogany and brass-framed glass surmounts the chimney-piece, and above that are trophies of the chase—viz., a fox's head and two brushes crossed. From nails in the wall hang whips and foils, a rusty old sword, etc., etc.; and on the big brass-bound cabinet are cases of stuffed birds, weasels, one or two polished horse-shoes, and a miscellaneous collection of pipe-cases, old dog-skin gloves, back numbers of *Bell*, *Bailey*, and such like periodicals, powder-flasks, cigar-boxes, fishing-tackle, shot-cases, with a multitude of other things such as are used for the requirements of country life.

To disturb this confusion is like the commencement of clearing out the Augean stables—you get things into a worse plight than ever by meddling with them; but at last, after superhuman exertions, my labors are crowned with success; and when, at half past twelve, I hear the approaching wheels of the pony-

carriage, Jack's parlor is quite fit for the reception of my sisters in their most fastidious mood.

"Why, Cis," cried Jack astonished, "you have made a clearance! I know, though, I shall be cursing my fate and your tidiness when your back's turned, and I don't know where to lay my hand on anything."

"No, you won't," I reply triumphantly, exhibiting a list of where everything is stowed away.

The girls go about exploring while I take a turn at the fishing-tackle, and ornament the dinner-table with flowers; and at two o'clock we all sit down, a regular family party, with the boys, to the sumptuous banquet that Mrs. Bateson, with the tardy Molly, has prepared for us. Dessert is spread under the trees in the garden, and thither we betake ourselves, while Jack goes to look after his reapers. Then we have tea, and wander out into the stubble-fields, where we sit under the shelter of a clump of big beeches near the hedge. I am sleepy after my exertions, and presently my heavy lids close, and I am away in a sweet dreamful slumber, lulled by the unbroken murmur of my sister's discourse.

---

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE SIBYL.

"Oh! I know more than that. And then they said
A cavalier from Court, handsome and tall
And rich, should come one day to marry you.
Was it not so?"

WHEN I awake, the first object that meets my eye is the bronzed, cunning face of an old gypsy woman peering over the five-barred gate.

"Tell your lucky fortunes, my pretty ladies," she begins in a wheedling voice; "you're born to good luck—the planet as see your births is a lucky one. Let the old gypsy cross your hands, and I'll tell you who's a-thinking of your bright eyes this moment, and the letter his name begins with. There's news a-comin' for one of you by the post as you little expects, and pleasant news you'll find it. One of you, I see by a somethin' in the eye, 'ull lead a roamin' life, an' won't settle long to one part nor another. Come, my pretty ladies, give the old gypsy a bit of silver, an' she'll tell you of all the lucky fortunes as is in store for you.

My sisters whispered eagerly together.

"Oh! do let us, Fan," says Ju.

"Oh! no, not that horrid old woman."

"Oh! yes, I shall. I've got my purse."

"Jack will be angry."

"No, he won't."

"Very well—you first."

The bright old mole's eyes peer fascinatingly through the bars as she sees her wheedling likely to be successful. In she comes. Ju extends her palm, and the silver piece wherewith to cross it.

"Ah!" says the gypsy with a cunning leer. "I see something

here—there's a dark gentleman 'ud be glad to hold your hand, my pretty miss, as I'm a-doin' now."

"I wonder if it's Captain Fenton," whispers Ju to Anna, with a delightful blush.

"A dark gentleman as looks very handsome in his red coat, and whose riggiment isn't a hundred miles away from here," goes on the old woman cunningly.

And Ju turns again:

"Isn't it wonderful? How ever did she know? Of course it's Captain Fenton."

"And he's a-thinkin' of you this minute a-riding along on his fine chestnut horse, and a-wishing he may meet you in the lanes."

"Is it a chestnut he rides?" whispers Fan.

And Ju answers:

"I don't know, but I dare say it is."

She evidently doesn't want to be *desillusionnee* about the diviner's powers.

"When shall I see him next?" she asks eagerly.

"There'll be a ball in the town afore very long, and you'll meet him there. I don't say you won't see him before, but then he'll have somethin' to say as you won't, may be, be very sorry to hear, my pretty miss."

"That's the race ball," whispers Ju, excitedly.

"Did you ever hear anything like it?"

A great deal of prophesying goes on—the two others have their fortunes told, with more or less satisfaction to themselves.

Anna is put down to a light gentleman with a wicked eye, and Fan's lover, being not yet upon the scene, is to be met at a dance before long. There are one or two surprises, one or two journeys, a wedding, and some good news, divided between them—all mixed up with some oracular jargon about the planets, and I am taken with a childish desire to have my share of the fun. But, alack! my purse is empty; my sisters won't lend me any money. They say it's nonsense my fortune being told—there can't be any news for me. I am ever so disappointed, but resign myself.

"Never mind, my pretty miss," says the gypsy, who seems a good-natured old thing. "I'll tell you your fortune for nothing, and you'll think of the poor old gypsy when you see her next time. And a rare fine fortune it be, too," she adds, scanning the lines attentively. "There's a very grand gentleman as loves you," and I blush scarlet, while my sisters look with ill-concealed contempt at me. "A fine tall gentleman, with beautiful blue eyes, as 'll make a great lady of you some day."

I am trembling in every limb, and the old woman looks acutely up at me.

"I know all about it," she says, nodding her bright eyes. "I know—I know——"

I begin to feel frightened lest she will divulge her knowledge in my sisters' hearing, but am wild to hear more.

"You'll see him, too, afore long, and you'll get a surprise,

too. He's a very handsome gentleman, with blue eyes and light hair."

"Oh! no," I utter involuntarily, and the crone pauses a moment.

"Ah! yes," she says presently, with a keen glance, "there's another fine gentleman, who's tall and got blue eyes, but his hair's dark, and you're a deal fonder of him than he is of you. Don't you have nothing to do with him, my dear—he'll bring you sorrow, but you look to the one as loves you."

I can't bear it any longer. Of course I know it's all nonsense, but I rise abruptly, and rush off with a flaming face to Jack, who is coming toward us across the stubble.

Some days after this little incident, so perturbing to my guilty mind, I bethink me of paying a visit to our neighbor, Miss Carlton, who lives with her brother in a pretty little white house on the London road, and is an assiduous cultivator of roses and gossip. Not ill-natured gossip, *bien entendu*, but that pleasant little chit-chat which, carried on in a friendly spirit and sparkling with a dash of humor, is one of the keenest enjoyments that brightens humdrum country life.

My sisters like her because she is hand-and-glove with all the neighboring "swells," and can tell them about the grand doings of the upper ten; I like her because she does not despise my ignorance and childishness, but seems as glad always to see me as if I were the most entertaining guest in the world. Mr. Carlton is a scholar and a hypochondriac: his poor sister would have a hard time with him but for the natural buoyancy and brightness of her disposition.

On this day we have had two or three thunder-showers, and I take advantage of an interval of fine weather to walk across to Whitehouse. Miss Carlton is in the garden, straw-hatted and gauntlet-gloved, tending her roses. As she sees me enter the garden gate, she leaves her flowers and comes briskly up.

"How d'ye do, my dear?—I am so glad to see you. I was just wishing some one would come in, for I'm in a talking humor, and haven't seen a soul these two days.

This is the cheery, pleasant way she always meets me.

"I am very glad I came, then," I answer.

"Come and hold the basket for me while I cut off the dead roses," says Miss Carlton; "and then we'll go in and have a cup of tea."

We have been busily employed for some minutes, when the click of the gate opening makes us look up.

"I declare it's Wilfred Carruthers!" exclaims Miss Carlton. "What brings him here, I wonder?" And she goes forward to meet him, to my utter and intense relief, for I should expire if she were to see my face at this juncture. By the time she has shaken hands with him and returned, I am tolerably composed again, though very undecided as to how I ought to behave. He comes up as though I were the most utter stranger, taking off his hat formally as Miss Carlton introduces us. I am silent, but supremely happy, as I stand listening to their conversation, only

bringing in a shy word now and then, when Miss Carlton kindly essays to draw me out.

We are just going in-doors to have some tea, when a sound of prancing hoofs makes us look toward the road. A moment, and Lady Cecil's ponies draw up in front of the gate. I dart a swift look at Wilfred Carruthers—his face is utterly, blankly unconscious—he does not even go forward with Miss Carlton.

The groom opens the gate, and in come the prancing ponies, with their beautiful mistress smiling and nodding behind them.

"How d'ye do, Miss Carlton? Will you be very angry with me for cutting up your gravel? It really is a shame when it's in such beautiful order."

And I turn to glance at the speaker, who looks more graceful and elegant than any one I have ever seen. To-day she is dressed all in soft yellow brown Japanese silk, with blue feathers in her hat, which become her wonderfully. A mortified sense of dowdiness comes over me as I think of the intense contrast I must present in the fastidious eyes of Mr. Carruthers to this lovely woman, and I hang back, almost hoping to be forgotten. But Wilfred turns to me.

"This is an unexpected meeting," he whispers in a kind voice. "I little thought of seeing you here to-day."

"Nor Lady Cecil?" I say quickly; and then I could bite my foolish tongue out, for a haughty look comes into his eyes, and he turn away from me to speak to *her*.

## CHAPTER XII.

### LADY CECIL.

"And he who has not learned to know
How false its sparkling baubles show,
How bitter are the drops of woe
With which its brim may overflow,
He has not learned to live."

DEEPLY mortified, I stand where he has left me, unconscious that the dead roses are dropping from the basket I hold on to the wet grass. I feel of another world from these two handsome, well-bred, well-dressed people, smiling in each other's eyes with happy familiarity—even homely Miss Carlton makes no link between us.

An intense desire to get away takes possession of me—if I can only reach the gate unperceived!

"No one will miss me," I say to myself bitterly.

Quickly I drop the basket and steal toward my goal; but Miss Carlton catches sight of me, and calls me by name—

"Doris, my dear, where are you going?"

"I must get home," I answer confusedly, "and I thought, as you were engaged, I wouldn't disturb you to say good-bye."

"I won't hear of such a thing," she cries cheerily. "Come and let me introduce you to Lady Cecil!"

And in spite of my protestation, for it is torture to me, she puts her hand on my unwilling arm and draws me forward. The words of introduction are spoken—her ladyship holds out a

dainty gray-gloved hand to me, and smiles very kindly. The bitterness dies out of my heart in a moment, as it always does at a kind look or word.

"You were not thinking of going with that great black cloud threatening?" she says pleasantly. "Drops are beginning to fall already. Miss Carlton, you must give me shelter and the ponies too."

And taking Wilfred's hand, she descends, and saunters toward the house, careless of the rain that is beginning to pour down in good earnest now. Miss Carlton gives the groom some directions, and then we run in for shelter.

Lady Cecil and Wilfred are standing by the window as we enter. Seeing us, she hastily puts her finger on her lips, and he, turning away, sits down to the piano. I take refuge in a corner to listen entrancedly to the soft Italian melodies he half sings, half hums; but Lady Cecil is laughing and talking very audibly to Miss Carlton, and does not seem to notice the music. I think it chafes him, for presently he turns sharply from the piano and gets up. Seeing my eyes fixed full upon him, he comes toward me, sitting down in front of me, with his back to the others.

"Well, child," he says, in a low, kind voice—"so you like music?"

"Oh! yes"—a poor little commonplace answer, but all my powers of expression are concentrated into it.

A wild, foolish desire takes me suddenly to keep him there talking to me, in spite of Lady Cecil's presence. Oh! what *do* women of the world say and do to keep men chained to their side, as I have heard and read of their doing scores of times? But no words come into my confused brain. I can only sit gazing at him with wistful, imploring eyes.

"You must learn not to show all you feel in your face, *carissima*," breaks in his voice, in the cold, supercilious accents with which he loves to wound me.

A great overwhelming shame comes over me; my cheeks burn, until the tears force themselves into my eyes, and I look helplessly away to avoid the gaze of my tormentor.

"Worse and worse," he whispers, impatiently. "For God's sake, child, do command yourself a little, unless you want these people to guess that this is not our first meeting."

"I don't care what they guess," I murmur, bitterly. "I don't see why you should be ashamed for any one to know we've met before."

"It's not becoming to you to look vixenish," he answers coldly. "Besides, if you reflect at all, you might know my anxiety was on your account. I'm not supposed" (with a sneer) "to be very good company for little innocent girls."

"Doris," interposes Miss Carlton's voice at this juncture, "Lady Cecil wants to hear you sing."

"Oh! indeed, indeed, you must excuse me," I falter, in great trepidation. "I can't sing—at least, only just so very, very little."

"Try, my dear," urges Miss Carlton.

"Yes, yes, you must indeed. I know by your voice you sing," says Lady Cecil, with one of her winning smiles.

It flashes across my mind for a moment that she wants to get me away from Wilfred, but a moment later I laugh myself to scorn for my vanity.

"Do—won't you?" says Wilfred, persuasively.

Perhaps he is sorry now for his unkindness to me, and wants to atone for it; but I am resentful, and won't even look at him. Miss Carlton darts me a little imperative nod; I do not like to refuse, but the ordeal is a terrible one.

My poor little fingers tremble so that I can scarcely grasp the keys; the little symphony is a very lame affair, and I know how my voice will quiver when I attempt to begin. But I make a violent effort, and sing the simplest little old English ballad that I know, getting through it somehow.

The two ladies give me profuse thanks and praise, to encourage me, I suppose; but Wilfred's low, earnest "Brava!" is worth all the rest to me. My pulse thrills and quickens, as leaning over me, he says:

"Another, little Doris. I could go on listening to you all the afternoon. What a thousand pities you don't sing Italian."

Again I sing, waxing more confident; and then again, until I no longer feel shy or frightened. Then tea comes in, and Wilfred goes over to Lady Cecil. They are talking about the race-ball, and I listen eagerly—so eagerly, I suppose, that my face again betrays me, for Lady Cecil, glancing at me, asks if I am going.

"No," I answer, regretfully.

"You are not old enough—not out yet, I suppose," she says, kindly.

"I have never been to a ball yet," I answer; "my sisters go—there would be too many if I went."

"That's hardly fair, is it, Mr. Carruthers?"

And I wonder secretly why she should be good enough to take so much interest in me.

"No," he answers; "certainly not."

"Make one of them stay at home," she says, playfully; "or get them to take you too. You look as if you would enjoy dancing."

My heart beats at the bare thought; an intense longing creeps over me to go to this ball, to have one glimpse of the fashionable world, to see Wilfred amongst his own set.

The rain has ceased. Phœbus is shining as he only can after a storm, and Lady Cecil rises to go.

"Miss Carlton, I must say good-bye. Mr. Carruthers, please ring for the ponies."

Three minutes afterward they are at the door; and, turning to me, she asks which way I am going.

"To Halling Farm," I answer.

"Halling Farm. We pass it on the way to Colton. You must let me drive you so far."

I fancy Wilfred looks a shade annoyed as I stammer a pleased

assent, but he helps us into the phaeton with equal care, and stands on the step bareheaded until we drive off.

(Ah! for the days of childhood, when a little thing can make us so jubilantly happy or so unutterably wretched. I don't know that we ought to regret them so bitterly, though; better to have those intense feelings blunted. If we do not enjoy as keenly, we cannot suffer as cruelly.) To-day, because I am riding side by side with Lady Cecil for a couple of miles, I am most radiantly happy. Ah! how sweet the hedge-rows smell, how fair and green is mother earth, how bright the sunshine, how blue the sky! I glance furtively now and then at the woman who has caused me so much pain—she is very beautiful, a delicate perfume seems to hang about her, and she is very, very kind to me. I don't think I can ever feel any rancor toward her again. I expect too a little kind of snobbish pride at being seen with this great lady animates me, for two or three passers-by who know us look askance, and half a mile from home we pass my sisters, who stare at me in blank astonishment.

"Good-bye," says Lady Cecil, shaking hands with me at the gate. "And mind you come to the ball."

I go straight to my room, look at myself in the glass, and then sit down despondently by the window.

"As if he would look at me," I say to myself, "when she is so lovely! Only—only that she is married!" That is a great source of consolation. I wonder how she can bear life tied to an old man like Sir Marmaduke Cecil, and begin to see a cross in the fate that at first sight seemed so brilliantly enviable. I say to myself, "Fine clothes and stepping ponies and grand society must be very delightful; but I would rather be poorly dressed and insignificant all my life-time to keep the privilege of loving the man who was my heart's lord." What a fearful, terrible thing, think I in my childish simplicity, to have given yourself to one man for his wealth and position, and to find afterward that you love another for himself! Surely poverty with Wilfred Carruthers would be heaven compared with the wealth of Indus with old Sir Marmaduke. But yet how happy she seems—how gayly she laughs and talks—how pleasant a thing life appears to be with her! Is she really happy, or does she carry the fox at her heart, and smile, while unbearable pangs are gnawing at her? Does she care for Mr. Carruthers, and does he care for her? Was the meeting intentional this afternoon? I think it was, and the thought is bitter to me. Then a sudden and violent desire seizes me to go to the race-ball. Oh! if they would only, only take me! I know they won't, but that makes my longing all the greater.

The tea-bell rings. Smoothing my hair, I go down-stairs. My sisters, who have just come in, are wild to know how I came to be driving with Lady Cecil, and I relate the events of the afternoon with a feeling of considerable importance. It is with a certain shamefacedness at my own hypocrisy, however, that I say:

"The gentleman who was talking to Lady Cecil in Colton the other day was there, and he is Mr. Carruthers' brother."

"The idea!" cries Fanny; "they never came together!"

"Oh, dear no," I answer quickly; "it was quite by accident they met there."

My sisters, who are much wiser than I, burst into a fit of laughter. I feel quite furious, and become scarlet.

"Rather too transparent, that!" laughs Julia.

"Rather!" echoes Anna.

"What do you think I heard the other day?" interposes Fanny. "That she was dreadfully in love with Mr. Carruthers, the eldest one, before she married, and would have given anything to have him."

"Well, she seems to be consoling herself with the other one now," sneers Julia.

I have been nerving myself for a great *coup*.

"Mamma," I break out suddenly. "Lady Cecil and—and—Mr. Carruthers both said I ought to go to the race-ball. Oh! mamma, dear mamma—papa—won't you let me go just this once, and I'll never, never ask you for anything again as long as I live?"

My sisters glance at each other and at me as if I had exhibited unexpected symptoms of madness. Papa and mamma look surprised.

"Why, my dear," says papa, "you're too young for balls yet."

"Yes, really, Doris," echoes mamma.

"Upon my word I think your brain has been turned by a little notice from these people," exclaims Fanny, contemptuously.

I look imploringly from papa to mamma, but they nod kindly and say:

"Perhaps next year we may talk about it."

And I hide my diminished head. But all the same I do not cease to long desperately after the ball, and to rack my brain to compass going. Oh! for the days of Cinderella—of fairy godmothers and pumpkins; of rats and mice capable of transmigration or transmogrification. I form a desperate plan, which two days afterward I carry into execution. Jack has come in for an hour on his way home from Colton.

With my whispered entreaty that he will come a little way down the lane he complies at once. I wait until we get to the big meadow gate shaded by a stunted elm, and then I perch myself solemnly on the top bar, resting one hand on my brother's big shoulder.

"Jack!" I whisper, putting my face close to his, and rubbing my cheek against his like a friendly pony, "Jack, do you love me?"

He turns and looks at me.

"Is that what you brought me out to ask?" he inquires.

"Jack," I say again, in the most persuasive voice I can command, "would you do anything for me?"

"Yes, my pet, I would," he answers, kissing me, "anything in reason, at least."

"But if it were something out of reason?" I urge, putting all my poor little heart into my voice: "oh! Jack, would you?"

"Why, Cis!" says my brother, looking curiously at my flushed face and quivering lips. "What in the world can it be? I never saw you so eager about anything before. Well, tell me, at all events."

"I want to go to the race-ball."

The words came out in a gasp.

Jack gives a prolonged whistle.

"Oh! Jack, if you'd only manage it somehow, I would be grateful to you forever."

I look imploringly at his face as if life or death hung on his answer, but he only says, blankly:

"That comes of being seventeen, I suppose."

"Oh, Jack!"

And I put both my arms round his neck, tight enough to strangle him.

I can find no more words.

"Why do you want to go?" he asks presently; and then as if a sudden thought struck him, he turns to me with a grave look.

"Cis," he says, "you've not been getting your silly little head turned by one of the Colton red-coats, eh?"

"No, no, indeed, Jack," I answer; but I hide my face on his shoulder with a guilty feeling.

"But, my dear," he continues kindly, "I'm afraid, if you did go to this ball, you'd be disappointed. You won't know any one, and it will be very mortifying if you have to sit down all the evening."

"Lady Cecil said I was to be sure and go," I stammer faintly.

"Now, Cis, if that's all your reason for wanting to go," says practical Jack, "take my advice and stop away. I don't suppose Lady Cecil will even remember to nod to you. Don't *you* go and get the girls' silly notions into your head. Whatever we may have been, we don't belong to the swells nowadays, and to expect or want their notice is only to bring down all sorts of mortification on your head. Why, child, I thought you were above running after great folk."

"Oh, Jack, it isn't that!" I cry, imploringly—"it isn't indeed. And I don't care if I sit down all the evening, only do—do take me this once."

---

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE THORNS OF THE ROSE.

"If you loved me ever so little,
I could bear the bonds that gall—
I could dream the bonds were brittle;
You do not love me at all."

In the end I obtain Jack's promise, sealed with a kiss; and when Jack promises a thing, it goes very hard with him but he fulfills it. So he cajoles papa and mamma, defies my sisters, and finally declares that he will pay for my ticket and dress, and

take me himself. I don't believe any one else in the world ever had such a brother, bless his dear heart! My sisters, of course, are furious. Fanny declines to go to the ball altogether, and I do not sleep quite on a bed of roses during the period that intervenes between my rash request and the ball.

All this time I have never once seen Wilfred Carruthers, though my foolish heart longs and aches after him, if only just to see him—to hear his voice once. How I count the days to the ball!—how my whole soul is wrapped up in this one event! Jack has stipulated that my dress shall be all white, without a particle of color, and my sisters make sneering remarks as to the fright I shall look with my white face unrelieved by any brightness. Whether I look well or ill is a very secondary matter of importance to me just now. To be present at the ball—to be noticed publicly by *him* (surely he will notice me!) to watch him among his own set—I think that happiness will be sufficient.

Well, the day comes at last—Colton Cup day; and the evening of the day arrives in sequence, though I wander up and down in a fever all the weary morning and afternoon, counting the minutes as hours, and finding no rest for the sole of my foot. Many a loving glance I take at my simple finery, eager for the time when I shall don it, and sally forth to my first ball.

Never did *debutante* in the fashionable world look more eagerly, longingly forward to her appearance in society than I do to the race-ball. Not for the sake of the conquests I am to make—Heaven knows what small hope or thought I have of those!—but for the sake of seeing the one man who is everything in the world to my poor foolish child's heart. By half past nine I am arrayed in my white dress and satin slippers, which Jack sent to London for, because there were none small enough at the Colton shops.

"Don't forget to lose your shoe," he laughs. "I wonder what prince will pick it up."

Fanny and Julia turn up their noses at his sally—it is so very pointless.

No flowers or gewgaws wear I in my hair or on my neck and arms. If Jack has a fancy for simplicity, he must certainly be gratified.

"Dear little white daisy," he says, lovingly. "I shouldn't be surprised if the made-up fine ladies don't envy you."

But I smile at his fatuity.

We arrive at Colton soon after ten—quite early, for the first dance has not yet commenced. The grandees have not arrived, and the musicians are only just taking their places, and making preliminary scrapings of a most exciting nature to my dance-loving feet. If there is one thing in the world I love better than another, it is dancing, for all I have had so little opportunity of indulging my passion. Jack dances the first quadrille with me, but I am watching the door so eagerly that I forget my turn, and make all sorts of mistakes, until he feels himself called upon to reprove me for my carelessness.

"Come, come, you know, Cissy, this won't do when you dance with any one else," he says, good-humoredly.

I try to repress my feverish anxiety, and attend to the quadrille. When it is over, Jack introduces me to a friend for the next waltz; and after that one of the officers asks to be introduced to me. We have just finished a galop when I see Sir Marmaduke and Lady Cecil enter the room. Hosts of great ladies have come in before, and I have never felt the least humiliated by their superior splendor; but when Lady Cecil sweeps up the room a sudden sense of my own insignificance comes across me with positive pain. She too is all in white, but what a contrast to my poor cheap tarlatan—shimmering satin, with clouds of dainty lace, diamonds in her hair, on her neck, in her ears, on her arms. A murmur of admiration goes round the room as she enters—Aphrodite leaning on Silenus.

Eagerly I watch her as she stands laughing and talking amongst the aristocratic throng at the upper end of the room, and note how the men come swarming round her.

I am only vaguely conscious of the remarks of my companion, and answer his questions at random. Do I live near Colton, or am I only there for the ball? Have I won many gloves on the race? Did I back Blue Peter or Bucephalus? Do I prefer a brass or string band? etc., etc. I should like to be polite. I suppose it is a great compliment this fine young dandy with the pointed mustache dancing with me at all; but I can see and think of nothing but Lady Cecil present and Wilfred Carruthers absent. *Will* he come? My heart almost stands still at the bare possibility of anything keeping him away. No, there he is, at Lady Cecil's side. Has he sprung from the ground? I never saw him enter. Now he is bending over the beauty, writing his name upon her card, and then I see him paying the same attention to a host of other ladies. Until this moment I have never put the thought into actual shape that he would ask me to dance; but as I see him laughing and talking to these great ladies, and writing his name on their programmes, a sense of bitter disappointment steals over me. The first bars of the lancers sound, and my partner leads me to a seat, after putting his name down for another dance. It is very charitable of him, for I am sure he must have found me unbearably stupid. That dance I sit out, getting hot and cold by turns with anxiety and disappointment as I think Wilfred Carruthers will not see me. Oh! I feel sure he would come and speak to me, if only he once caught sight of me. But he is dancing at the upper end of the room, amongst all the grand people, and little chance is there of his seeing my poor eager face. I try to look calm and unconscious, but all the time I know that my eyes are straining, and my lips quivering, and that I look ready to cry. In the midst of it all, when I am hoping no one will notice me, Jack comes up, and asks if I am enjoying myself.

"You don't look very jolly," he remarks. "Come, Cis, brisk up!" and I feel quite angry and bitter with him for the moment, forgetting all I owe to his goodness.

"Come and have some refreshment, dear," he says; and I take his arm gladly, though I want nothing. But I would submit to the water torture in order to get a little nearer to Wilfred Car-

ruthers. How handsome he looks! There is no one in the room to compare with him—in my estimation, at least. People may call his brother handsomer; I would not name them in the same day.

He is dancing with Lady Cecil now. The waltz has commenced, and he is just putting his arm round her waist. They are a splendid pair; miserable, jealous though I am, I cannot deny that, but oh! I hate her in that moment. Mr. Carruthers is talking to Lady Flora Lyon. As we pass, his eye falls upon me, and, making a hasty apology to her, he comes up to me.

"Miss Keane, I hope your card is not full. Will you give me a dance?" and I blush with sudden pleasure and surprise. Hardly because of the compliment it is for such a great man to notice me, but because it takes me a step nearer to his brother.

"Oh, thank you," I answer, feeling very grateful to him, and not comprehending that it is unorthodox to show your gratitude to a man for asking you to dance.

"Will you let me have number seven, the next but one?"

I stammer a glad assent.

"And will you think me very importunate if I ask for number ten as well?"

"Oh, no," I answer; and he thanks me in such a courtly, pleasant voice, giving me back my card when he has written upon it.

"Upon my word, Cis," whispers Jack, in a delighted voice, with a squeeze of my arm, "I think you *are* in luck. To have such a swell as that wanting to dance twice with you; why, Ju and Anna will be ready to tear your eyes out."

I suppose I ought to be wild with delight, but I am in such a fever of longing for the notice of Wilfred Carruthers that every other drop of pleasure is poisoned.

As we go back to the ball-room, he passes me quite close, looks at me, gives a slight, distant bow, and passes on without further notice. The hot blood rushes to my cheeks, the tears to my eyes, a sudden unbearable pain catches me, and I can scarcely command my trembling knees. When a tall, fair-haired man comes up with my first partner, and is introduced to me, I look almost wildly at him, and can scarcely control my voice sufficiently to answer him when he asks me for a dance.

What do I care though every man in the room went on his knees to ask me for a dance, when *he* has passed me with such a slighting recognition? Somehow, I get through the dance, and answer what is said to me; and then Mr. Carruthers, coming to claim me, carries me off to the upper end of the room. I catch sight of my sisters watching me with envious eyes—oh! if they could only see how bitter and mortified, rather than exultant, is my heart, little would they envy me. Devoutly I thank Heaven that the power of reading each other's breasts is withheld from us mortals. One thing I am grateful for, and that is, Mr. Carruthers' exceeding kindness! He treats me with as courteous consideration as if I were one of the greatest ladies; and I can see the half curious, half supercilious looks with which the fair brood regard the little stranger bird. Lady Cecil is dancing in the same set; she stops and speaks kindly to me, saying she is

glad to see I have come to the ball after all. I cannot find a word to answer her, but only blush exceedingly, feeling very silly and awkward.

"Do you like balls?" Mr. Carruthers asked me.

"I never was at one before."

"Then, of course, you are enjoying it immensely," he smiles.

And I answer:

"Oh, yes," thinking that I have never been much more wretched.

"I am longing for my waltz with you," he says again, presently. "I have been watching you, and I don't think there is a better dancer in the room. You glide about like a little fairy."

"I am glad you think so," I respond, shyly. "I am so very, very fond of dancing. But perhaps I shall disappoint you when the time comes."

"No, that I'm sure you won't," says Mr. Carruthers heartily, looking down at me so kindly with his blue eyes that I cannot help thinking them beautiful, though not like Wilfred's.

All this time I am watching the man who has been my hero, but who seems now as if he never wanted or cared to be anything to me again. He is standing near the doorway, watching Lady Cecil with a look of dreamy intensity, never once removing his eyes. If I could only hide myself away somewhere to cry my heart out, but I am obliged to talk and smile. Now and then I fancy Mr. Carruthers looks at me with a long penetrating gaze, and feel horribly afraid lest he should discover my secret.

"Have you been helping old Hay in his garden lately?" he asks me presently.

"No," I answer, "not since—not since the day——"

"When I first had the pleasure of seeing you?" he interposes.

"No."

"I have often been by since, and looked out for you. If I had been a painter I should have liked to have made a sketch of you."

"What! picking up slugs?" I asked, laughing in spite of myself.

"Yes, slugs and all, though I did not know that was your occupation, but I could see you were practicing the virtue of charity very sweetly and helpfully."

"Oh! that was nothing," I disclaim. "Old Hay was our servant once—he's a dear old man—I like nothing better than to go and see him."

"Do you read to him sometimes?"

"Oh! yes, very often when his eyes are bad."

"Ah! I remember his telling me once of a dear, sweet little lady who was as good as eyes to him in the winter-time. That must have been you."

"I don't know," I stammer, rather confused.

"It makes me almost feel envious of the old fellow," says Mr. Carruthers.

And I laugh, thinking this is the polite jargon fashionable gentlemen talk to fashionable ladies, but which is thrown away upon me.

The quadrille over, he gives me his arm, and leads me into another room. A tall dark-haired man comes and whispers something in his ear; and turning to me, he asks if I will permit him to introduce Lord Levinge. Why does fate hold the balance so carefully between pleasure and pain, taking such infinite pains to drop the lead into the scale when the former wants to gain the ascendency? Pain may be bearing down with pound weights, and scarce a feather in pleasure's side, and it never interferes then.

I ought to be the happiest, blithest, most exultant maiden in all the Colton Assembly Rooms, and Heaven help the one who is more miserable! Lord Levinge asks me to dance the next dance, and Mr. Carruthers, transferring me to his arm, goes away.

As I return to the ball-room on the arm of a lord—whom, by the way, I am tremendously afraid of—Wilfred Carruthers stops me. My face brightens up all at once, my heart gives a great bound, and I am lifted to the seventh heaven. Only for a moment, though; his manner, too, is so markedly, exaggeratedly courteous, it gives me a sense of my own inferiority that neither his brother's nor Lord Levinge's has done.

"Will you do me the honor of dancing with me?" he asks, and I give him my card eagerly. He writes his name for the last dance but one, and I feel more bitterly disappointed than if he had not asked me at all. I cannot help saying wistfully, as I look in his face with entreating eyes:

"I am afraid I shall be gone before then."

"I hope not," he answers coldly, returning my card; and I feel my cheeks burn, and my eyes get dim as he turns away. The effort must be made to laugh and talk to Lord Levinge, but I am conscious all the while that my gayety is a miserable sham, which deceives nobody. But he is most kind and courteous, and when the waltz is over asks me to dance the next one with him. That finished, Mr. Carruthers claims me again, and all this time I am dancing at the upper end of the room amongst the magnates, my sisters are watching me with amazement and envy. Then comes my dance with the officer. Lord Levinge and Mr. Carruthers both ask me again, and I can see that Lady Flora Lyon looks haughtily angry at me, more especially when Mr. Carruthers places me near her at supper, and insists on filling my plate with every delicacy.

It is very good of him, but I cannot swallow a morsel for the choking sensation in my throat. I drink a little champagne, although it is nauseous to me, and Mr. Carruthers seems quite anxious at my inability to eat.

"Young ladies never do eat at their first ball, you know," says old Sir Marmaduke Cecil from behind—"they can live on excitement: we want something a little more substantial, eh, Elsleigh?" and he helps himself to a plateful of truffle pie and aspic jelly. "A little more champagne, Carruthers. I know it's good, as you undertook to cater for us."

All this time I am watching Wilfred Carruthers and Lady Cecil, who are laughing and whispering together a little further

up the table on the opposite side. I cannot help turning to glance at Sir Marmaduke. Is he, I wonder, suffering any part of the excruciating pangs that tear my heart? Just at this moment he is supremely happy with his truffles and champagne—the expression of his countenance benign and radiant—no fox gnaws at his vitals—he is not even troubled by the thought of a morrow after the indulgence of to-night.

As we return to the ball-room, Lady Cecil and Wilfred Carruthers are just in front of us. She leans with a fascinating languor upon his arm—he bends down to her with all the tenderness of a lover. In my simplicity I wonder how she, a married woman, can hang thus upon a man who is not her husband, and wonder more that no one else but myself seems to remark anything strange in it.

"I shall have to go very soon," I hear her say. "Sir Marmaduke will not be beguiled into staying long after supper."

"When you leave, I shall," whispers Wilfred. "There will be nothing left me to stay for."

"Not *la belle ingenue?*" she laughs.

A sudden chill creeps over me—that is the name by which he once mockingly called me: can it be possible they are speaking of me? Can he have been so cruel as to tell her? For a moment I hate them both with a child's passionate anger.

"Not even *la belle ingenue*," he sneers; and at the moment she half turns her head and sees me. Her fingers tighten on his arm, then I know it was me they meant. There is only one thing I want now—to be gone, out of sight, out of hearing of them.

My dream is done. I am awake with a rough grasp upon me, and I long to hide myself out of the world's sight. Now I see how bitterness may lurk beneath the world's most tempting gifts; now I perceive how one may be amongst the gay, the great, caressed and flattered, yet more miserable than the beggar asking a crust. Hitherto I have seen the rose with its velvet leaves, its sweet perfume, its dainty hues, now I am shown the worm gnawing at its core.

---

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A SILVER PROBE.

"Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play,
For some must watch while some may sleep,
Thus runs the world away."

I AM utterly, intensely thankful when my sisters, who have not enjoyed their evening very much, declare they are tired to death, and must and will positively go. Lady Cecil and Wilfred Carruthers have both left; Jack is all for stopping—the dear fellow thinks I must be enjoying my evening so supremely, looking at the favorable circumstances which have attended it. He seems quite surprised when I confess my willingness to go. As soon as we are ready in the fly, he gives me a hearty hug. "Well, little one," he says, "I think you've just about done it

to-night. I never knew such a lucky little puss in all my life." And he rattles on about my triumphs, and this, that, and the other, all tending to my glorification, though I try to stop him, knowing it is not pleasant hearing to my sisters, who, silent and cross, pretend to be asleep in their corners. But nothing will silence him. Dear fellow, I am sure he had a happy evening, if no one else had; but then Providence justly ordains that we are always the happier for doing a kind action.

Papa and mamma are both sitting up for us, and Jack has willing listeners to his recital of my good fortune, while my sisters take their candles and go to bed, and I am very glad to follow them. When Hepzibah has grumblingly unfastened my dress, and left me, I sit down on the edge of my bed and look blankly before me. I cannot cry—that would be a relief—but I sit there benumbed into a kind of stupor, trying to conquer my love, and with it my pain. I call myself hard names; I inveigh bitterly against my folly in caring for this man, who is so utterly, scornfully indifferent to me. I try to tell myself I will never think of him—never strive to see him again. But the end of it all is that I throw myself down on my pillow, muttering passionately, "Oh! Wilfred, Wilfred, won't you care for me a little when I love you so?" I would go to the world's end for a kind word from him. It may be folly, madness, but in spite of all, the love of him thrills through every vein of my aching heart.

At breakfast the next morning every one wonders to see my scared wan face; they think to find me jubilant and triumphant at the success of my evening. Success! little they guess what a miserable failure I had found the much-longed-for ball.

Two days later I am sent into Colton to execute some commissions for mamma. My sisters have taken the pony-carriage in an opposite direction. The distance from our house is three miles, and I am to walk there and back—no hardship to me, good walker as I am, and used to perpetual motion.

Having finished my shopping, I am sauntering slowly out of the town, when the sound of prancing hoofs behind makes me look round. It is Lady Cecil's ponies, and I turn my head quickly the other way. But she pulls them up, exclaiming:

"Miss Keane!"

Perforce I stopped and looked at her. She is lovelier than ever to-day, all in silver gray, with scarlet geraniums in her white hat; and I, feeling jealous of her, cannot bear to look at her radiant beauty and elegant apparel.

"Miss Keane, where are you going?"

"Home," I answer, reluctantly taking the hand she stretches toward me. I do not know if it is right to say my lady to her, so I say nothing.

"Get in, will you?" she says.

"No, thank you," I answer.

"Oh! do!—I want to speak to you."

Still I shake my head.

"Do—won't you?" she says again; and I reply, trying to stifle my bitterness:

"I will not trouble you."

"Come, I insist," she continues, smiling very sweetly, and I feel constrained to do as she desires. It comes across me to wonder if she likes to make me a foil in my shabbiness for her beauty.

"That's right," she exclaims, as I take my place beside her; and then as we get outside the town, she pulls the ponies up in a walk.

"How did you like the ball?" she asks, presently.

The color comes into my cheeks as I feel she must have known and triumphed over my misery and is only seeking to mortify me.

"Very much, thank you," I answer, biting my lips.

"You had quite a success—Lord Levinge and Mr. Carruthers were both *epris* with you."

I am silent.

"Do you like Wilfred Carruthers?" she asks, presently, flicking a bough that protrudes from the hedge with her delicate whip.

Why does this elegant, high-bred woman want to torture a poor simple rustic like me? Why does she even stoop to notice an insignificant worm, that she can set her aristocratic feet upon with impunity? I am at a loss what answer to make; and as I remain silent, she turns and looks interrogatively at me.

"I scarcely know anything of Mr. Wilfred Carruthers," is my reply, given defiantly.

"But you have seen him several times."

"It is little matter if I like him or not," I say, biting my lips. "He would scarcely deign to notice me before grand people."

"Then he is different alone with you?" and Lady Cecil shoots a questioning glance at me. I crimson with anger and confusion.

"I don't know what he would do," I stammer. "I am never likely to see him alone."

She is silent for a moment, then she says

"Do you think him very handsome?"

"Yes," I answer coldly.

"And clever?"

"Yes," I say again, "At least I suppose so. I have no means of knowing."

"Yes," says Lady Cecil, thoughtfully, "he is just the man to fascinate a young girl. "Will you take a piece of advice from me, Miss Keane?"

I am silent.

"Don't let him gain any influence over you; he is a thorough man of the world, he might do you harm, and could never do you any good."

My lip curls in very scorn. This is too transparent—her trying to underrate Wilfred Carruthers to me. And surely her own charms are potent enough to remove all fear of such a poor rival as I.

"You may misunderstand or misjudge me," she continues,

quickly, "but I am advising you for your good. The less you have to do with Wilfred Carruthers the better."

"Thank you," I return, proudly, "your caution is unnecessary—I am nothing to Mr. Carruthers."

"But is he nothing to you?" she asks, quickly.

Angry tears well into my eyes. A sense of passionate wrath overcomes me at the cruelty of this woman, from whom I cannot escape.

"I do not know why you say these things to me," I exclaimed, bitterly.

"I will not say any more, since it offends you," she answers, coldly, touching the off pony lightly with her whip, and they break into a sharp trot.

Not another word is spoken between us until we come to the farm; and she wishes me a cold good-bye, without offering me her hand. I am glad she does not; my heart is so full of indignant bitterness against her, I could scarcely bear even the light clasp of her slim fingers. Not a word of thanks do I utter; my head is erect—I bow haughtily, to the full as proud as she. I have not sought her favors, nor her company. Why did she notice me, except to triumph over and mortify me? Why should she give me advice about Mr. Carruthers, except for some hidden selfish motive that I cannot as yet comprehend?

Two more days pass, that are spent by me in the woods, in longing for sight of the man to whom my heart clings more intensely than ever. If I could only, only see him—just hear the sound of his voice once, even though it spurned me.

It is becoming a madness, that longing to see him, despite of coldness, slight, and indifference. When I reach home on the second evening, a great confabulation is going on in the drawing-room.

"What *do* you think has happened, Doris?" says mamma, as I enter. "Miss Carlton has been here with a note from Lady Cecil, in which she invites you to go over to Lofton Park next week, to dine and stay the night. I think you are a lucky girl."

My breath comes and goes with a strange fluttering.

"Mamma," I gasp, "I—I would rather not go."

"Not go!" cry my sisters in a breath. "Are you mad, Doris?"

"No," I say, collecting myself, "but I don't want to go."

They all look at me as if sudden insanity had taken possession of me.

"This is too ridiculous!" exclaims Fanny.

"My dear child!" utters my mother, bewildered, "what are you thinking of?"

"I don't like Lady Cecil," I say, coloring, "and I do not care to go to her house."

"Oh, do pray ruin the only chance the family has ever had of looking up," exclaims Julia, sarcastically, "it will give us another proof of your sense."

"If you offend Lady Cecil you may depend on it none of your grand acquaintances will ever notice you again," chimes in Anna,

angrily. "I suppose the little notice you had at the ball has quite turned your brain, and you think it fine to give yourself airs."

"I do not wish to go," I say, resolutely.

But the more I oppose the more they insist; and when at last papa and mamma seriously represent to me the folly of declining such a compliment, and the injury it may inflict on the rest of the family, I am fain to give in. Miss Carlton is to chaperon me, and a polite acceptance is sent through her to Lady Cecil.

Two new dresses are purchased for me, the first I have ever had in my life—a pink silk for the dinner and a morning toilet of blue and white muslin.

Here was Fortune showering favors upon me that would have driven me crazy with delight three months ago, and withal holding back from me all power to enjoy them.

"Such is life;" a triteism taken not from memories of copy-books, but from a seal with which I was wont to fasten my letters, depicting a curiously masted ship roughing it in very curly billows.

I don't know how I get through the time that intervenes between the invitation and my visit to Lofton Park, but I am considerably uneasy and nervous, unable to settle to anything, longing most intensely for one glimpse of my Greek hero, and longing in vain.

My sisters are wild with envy at my good fortune, and I am dreading the day with a horror quite inadequate to the occasion.

I know in my heart that I am only going to my bitter humiliation—to a repetition of the heartache, the impotent, defenseless wretchedness of the race-ball; and I shrink from it as a wounded animal would shrink from a rough hand laid upon its cruel hurt.

Great preparations are made for this grand occasion. My sisters, feeling how much depends on my success, strive hard to make the best of me; lend me their ornaments, and go individually and collectively into despair at my incompetency to arrange my hair in a fashionable manner. They insist on giving me lessons; and I am docile and obedient, though in my own mind I feel sure it suits my small face better to have my hair twisted up in simple coil than elaborately braided and puffed out as they desire. However, it little matters, I say bitterly to myself; braided, twisted, disheveled, it will be all equally powerless to make me pleasing in the eyes of Wilfred Carruthers when Lady Cecil is present; so they may e'en do with me as they choose.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BLACK KITTEN.

"Nay, what have I said?
I would not be glad if I could.
My dream and my dread
Are of her."

"I SAY, Cis," says Harry, the morning before the pending dinner-party, "there's some new kittens in the loft—come and see 'em."

I, who dote on kittens, comply without demur.

"Is there a black one amongst them?" I inquired, breathlessly, as we rush across the yard.

"Yes, an ugly little beast; we're going to drown it, Dick and I."

"Oh! you mustn't indeed—I want it," I cry, having somewhere heard that when a black cat comes into a family it brings luck.

"Why, you've got three cats already," retorts Harry: "and I know ma won't have another about the house."

"Very well, then, I'll keep it in the loft—anywhere; but have it I must," is my resolute response.

"I wouldn't have told you if I'd known," he says, sulkily. "There'll only be two for us to drown now, for Jack Ryan's going to have one of the tabbies."

"Oh! you cruel boy!" I utter, reproachfully.

It has always been a source of wonder to me, that innate love of cruelty in boys—that savage, intense delight in inflicting suffering. I know many a kind, good-natured, tender-hearted man now who'd have thought it fine fun to stone a cat, or shoot rabbits from a sack, or such like cruelties in his boyish days, without a vestige of apparent consciousness that he was doing anything cruel.

"Very well," retorts Harry, "if I'm cruel, then you sha'n't see 'em at all," and he dashes suddenly into the stables, bolting me out. "I'll go up and wring the black one's neck now," he says, viciously, through the key-hole.

"Oh! Harry, please, please, don't!" I entreat, almost ready to cry with fear lest he should carry out his threat.

"Very well, then, say I'm not cruel, and you told a story when you said I was," says my brother, tyrannically, taking a mean advantage of the superiority of his position.

"You're not cruel; and I told a story when I said you were," I repeat, obediently; and he unlatches the door suddenly, which almost causes me to tumble in head foremost.

"That's like a woman," he utters, disdainfully—"to say one thing one moment, and then to turn round again the next and say the opposite, just because she wants something out of you."

"And pray, sir, what do you know about women?" I ask this juvenile moralizer, with an irrepressible smile.

"A good deal more than you think," he replies, dogmatically—"I know you're all a jolly lot of humbugs, and don't care

what stories you tell if you want to get anything out of a fellow."

"I suppose Amy's been doing something to offend you," I surmise; "eh, Harry?"

Amy is the young lady of Harry's affections, whose brothers go to his school.

"She's a nasty little humbug," replies my brother, viciously, "and I'll never believe in a girl again."

"Why, what has she been doing?"

"Oh! yes, I dare say you'd like to know, Miss Inquisitive," he retorts.

"Of course I should," is my answer. "I always like to know anything that concerns any of you boys."

"Well," returns Harry, after a moment's deliberation, planting his back to the wall, regardless of whitewash. "I don't mind telling you; but you promise faithfully not to tell the others, mind."

"I promise."

"Ah! but you broke your word just now," he says, suspiciously.

"Oh! but that was different."

"Well, you know, I saved up all my pocket-money a long time before last Valentine's day, and sold my four-bladed knife into the bargain, to buy her a valentine. Well, it was a stunner, and I gave seven-and-sixpence for it. Now, Cis, would you believe it" (getting very excited), "if that little snub-nosed beast Mattson hadn't got it in his pocket last week, and showed it to me behind the Latin Grammar! I didn't take any notice then, but as soon as school was over I took it away from him, tore it to bits, and punched his head well. I got a precious licking for it afterward, but I didn't care a pin for that."

"What a shame!" I say, sympathetically. "And what did Amy say?"

"Swore she didn't give it him; but I knew better, because her brother Bob saw her. Women are all alike. There was Lady Cecil the other day—she's a real beauty, if you like, though!"

"What of her?" I say, eagerly.

"Why, the other day I was up at Southcote Park with old Hay—he had often promised to take me to see the stables. Oh! I say, Cis—you would just like to see them—fit for a king to live in, cost no end of money to do up last year."

"Yes, but about Lady Cecil," I interrupt, impatiently.

"Well, I'm coming to her, if you'll give me time. She came in with Mr. Carruthers' brother" (oh! why will my cheeks get red?)—"well, miss, what are you blushing about? It wasn't the one who danced with you at the ball——"

"Go on, go on," I say almost crossly, for his unconscious stab goes home.

"Well, she came in with him—Mr. William, I think they called him—and she had a rose in her hand, and by the way he looked I knew he was asking for it, but she wouldn't give it him. Just after, in comes Mr. Carruthers, with the most beau-

tiful little dog you ever saw—oh! such a mite, you could almost put it in a teacup.

"'Oh! what a little darling,' says she. 'Oh! Mr. Carruthers, you must sell it to me.'

"'I'd give it to you in a moment,' says he, 'only it's half promised to Mrs. Forsyth.'

"Then I heard the other one whisper to her:

"'I'll get it for you,' and she smiles up at him, oh! as sweet as honey, and gives him the rose, and her hand to squeeze with it."

"Did they see you there, Harry?" I ask, rather hoping not, as my brother's week-day costume is not of the most *recherche* order. "Did they know who you were?"

"Oh, yes; the brother's a nasty, stuck-up chap. He didn't notice me, but Mr. Carruthers was very kind, and spoke to me; and when he found who I was he told me to go to the kitchen-garden and have as much fruit as I liked. And didn't I just, too!" adds Harry, smacking his lips at the bare remembrance.

"And was that all he said?"

"No, he asked me something about my sisters, and if they liked flowers; and I was to tell the head gardener to give me a lot, but it wasn't likely I was going to bother with rubbish like that."

I forbear any remonstrance—it was not Wilfred who had wanted to send them, or I should not have passed so lightly over Harry's selfishness; and besides, my heart is too bitterly full of the thought that he is as devoted to Lady Cecil as he is indifferent to me. Oh! if I could only, only get out of going to this hateful party, where I already see so much humiliation in store for me. Of course Wilfred will be there—of course he will devote himself to *her*—of course my tell-tale face will betray my misery, and she will triumph in her soft, cruel, delicate way. Oh! just for two days to be a charming, lovely woman of the world! to foil her with her own weapons, and then to sink back into the poor little country girl whom no one cares for. But I remember with shame and confusion my attempt to fascinate Wilfred at Whitehouse, and give up all idea of a second trial.

To-morrow night! well, it will soon be here now.

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A GLIMPSE OF EL DORADO.

"Quel bonheur plus grand que de croire en quelqu'un que l'on estime au-dessus de tous les hommages, que l'on admire comme un etre superieur a soi-meme, superieur a tout ce que l'on connait dans le meme ordre."

TO-MORROW becomes to-day, and, in spite of my prescience of evil and discomfiture, I cannot help feeling one throb of pleasure that I am at least going to see Wilfred Carruthers. I will nerve myself to a mighty effort; I will learn to make my face inscrutable, so that even though I suffer, no one shall guess it. If I am to go amongst people of fashion, at least I must try to copy their ways. I promise yet more to myself. I will not even suf-

fer, but will school myself to indifference, will learn to look on unmoved while he bends over Lady Cecil smiling in her eyes. Surely the power of controlling our hearts must be given to us; surely we are not such poor miserable puppets of fate as to be doomed to suffer these tortures against our fixed downright will.

Lady Cecil will send a carriage; Miss Carlton is to call for me. We are to go dressed for dinner, taking our morning toilets with us. My sisters all come in to take part in my equipment, and I resign myself passively to their direction, with a latent hope that they may after all make something of me.

When I am appareled in all my grandeur, the whole family comes to survey me, and turns me about for inspection, until I am hot, sick, nervous, and dying to get away. I can see that my sisters are not satisfied with the result of their labors, and don't expect much from my appearance; but the boys are all enthusiastic, from Harry, who says I look "screaming," to Jack, who avers that I am like a dear little white rosebud.

Seven o'clock; the carriage rolls up to the door, making sad havoc of our carefully-rolled gravel; and Miss Carlton is looking out, all smiles and voluble promises to take care of me. I should like to sit back and be quiet during our five-mile drive, but my companion is in a most loquacious mood, and gives me no opportunity for indulging my desire for taciturnity. So delighted to have been instrumental in bringing me out!—so fortunate I should have met Lady Cecil that day at Whitehouse!—such a charming place to stay at!—such a great thing for my future Lady Cecil taking a fancy to me! she rattles on, and I try to put some enthusiasm into my responses, but feel weighed upon and out of spirits all the time.

At last we get to the lodge gates of Lofton Park, and stop presently at the broad flight of steps in front of the house. It is a massive stone building, almost square—big enough for a palace, it seems to me—and there are beautiful gardens in front of it, laid out with every bright hue and shade of color, interspersed by fountains and orange-trees in green tubs. Further off there is a great lake, and beyond that a forest of trees sloping upward to the very verge of the horizon. A great many powdered footmen are standing round the door, and I feel extremely small and insignificant as two of them hand me out, and march me into the splendid hall, as big, I think, as the whole ground-floor of Halling Farm, hung with trophies of war and of the chase.

Divested of our cloaks, we are handed through a host of officials, to the drawing-room at last; and I try to look unconcerned as we pass through a suit of rooms whose magnificence seems, to my simple, untutored eyes, to surpass even that mentioned in my fairy tales. As we enter, Lady Cecil comes forward from the other end of the room, takes us warmly by the hand, telling us cordially how glad she is to see us; then she presents me to Sir Marmaduke, who, though most cordial in manner, frightens me a little; and then I am left sitting by myself, while our host and hostess go forward to greet fresh guests.

Timidly I look around. Several ladies and gentlemen are dispersed about, all strangers to me, of course. Wilfred Carruth-

ers is not among them, and for the first time the possibility dawns across my mind that he may not be coming at all. My face burns with sudden crimson at the bare thought. His absence seems a worse calamity than his not noticing me, being present. My eyes wander from the lace and diamonds of the ladies to the picture-lined walls and the curious cabinets of wonderful turquois blue china (I don't know Sevres from Chelsea), and quaint little figures sheltering under trees with impossibly big leaves, that stand all round the room. One thing I notice with surprise—that the graceful blue festoons above the windows are not drapery, but carved wood.

Absorbed in my discovery, I do not notice that some one has come up, and is standing at my elbow, until a voice says, "How do you do, Miss Keane? Will you recall your errant spirit to earth?" and I look around with a gentle start. I don't think there is anything more unpleasant than being made to jump, particularly when that saltatory movement is followed by a rush of blood from every part of your body to your face; except it is that the person who has caused you such dire confusion should stand smiling, with perfect consciousness and enjoyment of the effect he has produced. That is what Mr. Wilfred Carruthers is doing at this moment.

"How you frightened me!" I gasp, and he, smiling again, answers:

"So I perceive. Any one would think I had detected you in some very guilty act, instead of the harmlesss one of indulging the curiosity of your sex," and he sits down beside me.

"I did not know you were in the room," I say, beginning to cool down a little.

"How should you, when for the last five minutes your eyes have been heavenward, or ceilingward—at all events, very far above my head? I saw *you* the moment I entered."

"Did you?" A sudden joy comes across me at the tenderness of his voice, and I have forgotten all his neglect, all my bitterness—everything but the delight of hearing his voice once more speaking with the old accents.

"As if my eyes would not find you whenever and wherever you were near me!" he whispers, in his low, harmonious voice; and I forget that I am in a dry, prosaic world, where other people are waiting impatiently for their dinner, and laboring to get over the intervening moments with rather disjointed small-talk, and am half in a dream of exquisite delight, from which I am fain never to awake. "Do you believe in magnetic influence?" he continues; and I look up at him with my poor tell-tale face confessing how ready I am to believe anything and everything that he chooses. I suppose he accepts the answer of my eyes, for he presses his question no further, but looks tenderly at me, until I am fain to let my glance fall into my lap.

"Here comes my brother," he says presently. "Must I leave you to him?"

And I say "No, no, please don't," in an imploring voice, that makes him smile.

Oh, I do wish he would not smile like that! It says in plain language to me:

"I know you love me, poor little child. I know you are my slave, and I your master. You cannot hide from me the flutterings of your breast."

Mr. Carruthers comes up holding out his hand, and looking as if he were really glad to see me.

"How d'ye do, Miss Keane? What an age it seems since I saw you! I did not know there was such a pleasure in store for me to-night." And then Wilfred, rising, moved off, unheedful of my imploring glance. His brother drops into the vacant seat, while I feel impatiently indignant with him for having spoiled my delicious *tete-a-tete.*

"You went away so suddenly the other night," he says, drawing quite near, and fixing his eyes on my face. "I searched all round the rooms for you, but you were gone."

"Did you?" I answer coldly, following Wilfred with my eyes.

"Yes, and I have been past Halling Farm a dozen times since."

I am silent, scarcely hearing what he says, only intent on watching Wilfred.

"I hope Lady Cecil will let me take you in to dinner," he says again. "Will you agree to it, if I prevail on her?"

"Oh, thank you," I murmur, with a ghastly attempt to smile, feeling that my sudden glimpse of blue sky is lost irretrievably, now Wilfred's back is turned to me.

Of course it was insane to imagine any such happiness as being taken in to dinner by him; and I ought to feel grateful for the compliment paid me by Mr. Carruthers. But youth is irreflective and inconsequent, and would a thousand times sooner hang upon the arm of the "poor devil of a younger brother" than of the elder scion of his house, the *parti.* I would, I know, for all Mr. Carruthers is handsome, is kind, and has never made me feel vexed or small. I see him go up, whisper to Lady Cecil, see her smile, with a shake of the head and a little glance toward Lady Flora Lyon, whose handsome face wears a decidedly sulky expression. It seems a kind of respite for me. There is yet a hope, a very forlorn one, it is true, that I may fall to the share of Wilfred, as he cannot, of course, take his hostess. Another moment dinner is announced; then, as the dowagers in diamonds are pairing off with portly partners, I see Wilfred come toward me with the sweetest smile on his face; and if ever there was one moment of supreme happiness in my life I think it is this.

"One does not often get a pull over one's rich brother," he whispers; "but I have to-night. He doesn't look pleased, does he? It's a trick of his to gnaw his mustache when anything makes him angry. *La belle Flore* doesn't look pleased either."

My face is radiant with happy smiles. I catch Mr. Carruthers' eye fixed upon me with a vexed expression.

"When you know a little more of the world," whispers Wilfred, "you will never dream of committing the indiscretion of preferring a poor man to a rich one."

"What does it matter about people being rich?" I return, in an impetuous *sotto voce.* "I would fifty times rather——" Here I stop coloring.

"What?"

I remain silent.

"What, little one?"

"Oh! I don't know," I murmur, confused. "I was only going to say something foolish."

"Tell me," he whispers, with soft entreaty that I cannot resist. So I say, very lowly and shamefacedly:

"—— be with you than the richest man in all the world."

He presses the hand that lies on his arm, and whispers something that sounds like darling.

By this time we are in the dining-room—it might be fairyland for me—seeing there is every facination for my dazzled senses. A costly chamber hung with rare paintings; silver lamps throwing a subdued light over the scene: a magnificent profusion of gold and silver plate; glass gleaming like crystal: piles of costly fruit, fabulous to my simple eyes; and rich, rare flowers, blooming like a transplanted garden, and lading the air with their rich scents; and lastly—oh! not least—my fairy prince beside me, smiling in my eyes, looking glad of me, speaking, in a soft, entrancing whisper, words that make the blood dance through my veins, and fill me with a wild sense of rapture. There is only one little drawback to my enjoyment. Mr. Carruthers is just opposite, and through a break in the vista of flowers I can see his eyes fixed on me almost every time that I look up, and they do not wear a pleasant expression. I turn away, a little nettled. What is it to him, I think, if I am happy with his brother? Surely he, who has so much, can spare him the love of one little ewe lamb—one poor little insignificant being like me! For now I use no reticence, but tell myself frankly and freely that my heart is given up entirely to Wilfred Carruthers, to do with as he pleases; and I dare say my face tells plainly enough what is in my thoughts. He is so good and kind to me all dinner-time. I am so supremely happy at the sound of his voice, and the tenderness of his deep eyes, that I cannot eat one morsel of the dainties which are put every moment on my plate, or drink the nectar with which the attendant satellites would ply me.

"Youth and age have both their pleasures," whispers Wilfred. "Look at Lady de Vyne—how intensely she is enjoying her dinner! You have not arrived at the appreciation of the pleasures of a big dinner yet."

"No," I answer, in the same key, "and I don't want to."

"You see; I was right when I told you that love and roses, and strawberries and cream, were your *summum bonum* of the world's delights," he says, with a smile.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### "UN REVE, C'EST DOUX."

"Yes, Love is ever busy with his shuttle,
Is ever weaving into life's dull warp
Bright gorgeous flowers and scenes Arcadian;
Hanging our gloomy prison-house about
With tapestries that make its walls dilate
In never-ending vistas of delight."

I COULD sit forever at this Olympian feast, supremely happy at the bare presence of my love. No doubt some insulted goddess would have come to cast her apple—oh, most baleful of fruits!—upon the board and broken the spell of perfect bliss. I would not have cared to win the inscription on the "gleaming rind," so they had left me Paris; I would have owned all fairer, so they had yielded me the palm for the "most loving."

"I should like," says the soft, harmonious voice, "to look at life for once through your fresh young eyes, and to read in your heart your estimate of love. Something for which the world is well lost? or that can change it to a garden of Eden?—a fancy for which unknown sufferings can be undergone, undreamed pangs welcomed?—a theory which raises some miserable sordid mortal to God-worship in the heart that shrines it?—all that and more, is it not, *ma belle ingenue?*"

"Don't call me that!" I say quickly, hot and vexed.

"*Perche?*" asks Wilfred, raising his eyebrows ever so slightly.

"Because it makes me think you are mocking me, I answer, "and I would rather you would dislike than despise me."

"I, child!" he whispers ever so softly. "What right have I to despise a pure little fresh-souled creature like you! Am I entitled by the worldly wisdom I have gained from wasted years and misspent hours, by my bitter experiences, and the taste of dead-sea apples in my mouth? I envy you from the bottom of my soul. I would give ten years of my life for your simple faith and trust—only to be able to set up a god and worship it, even if it were an unworthy one. Tell me, little one, if you loved, would you see flaws in your idol; or would it be one perfect, harmonious thing of beauty, able to make your joy forever?"

"I don't know," I say, glancing shyly in his face as he looks expectant of my answer. "I don't think I should see any faults—but—but if I did, it would not alter my feelings."

"And if the creature you loved thwarted and slighted you, neglected you, and turned aside to other loves, what then? Would you be fierce and resentful, would you turn upon him, would you purchase your revenge at any cost, and choose a rival for him, however unworthy, sooner than not heap upon him some of the pangs he had made you suffer?"

"I!" I stammer, looking aghast at him.

"Yes, that is the favorite weapon of your sex. Do you think you would not use it?"

"No," I cry indignantly. "I might break my heart, but I could

never, never want to hurt or wound any one I loved. I should think it was my own fault if he grew tired of me, and I no longer pleased him."

A pitying smile dawns upon Wilfred Carruthers' face.

"Poor little child!" he says, caressingly. "Some one will make you very miserable one day. The world will teach you bitter lessons; the people you love will be your direct enemies, and some day you will wake up from your dream of what life might be to find out what it is. Then you will be like me—when all your sympathies have been crushed, and your best hopes disappointed, you will come at last to subscribe to what Solomon found out some thousands of years ago, and most of his descendants have acquired a painful knowledge of since—that all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

He looks away mournfully over my head, and as I see the sadness of his deep eyes, I feel a more profound admiration and love for him than ever.

"Love is a chimera, and happiness a delusion," he goes on, presently. "Tell me, child, have you not already in your short life had a great deal more pain than pleasure? I don't suppose you have known any actual suffering; but confess, now, have there not been many more hours when you have been dull and vexed than when you have felt pleased and gay? I suppose your greatest happiness has been dreaming your dreams about impossible bliss, and drawing charming little mental pictures about your fairy heroes?"

"Oh, I think I have been very happy," I answer, not wishing to contradict him, and yet feeling that I have no just cause to complain of life yet. "I never was miserable at all until——" here I came to a dead lock.

"Until what?"

But now that I have checked my glib tongue, I would not tell him for all the world. He, looking keenly at me, smiles—that smile of conscious power which I hate, or should, if I could bring my mind to hate anything about him.

"Until the day," he says, "when I came upon a poor little passionate white face, with tear-stained cheeks, a heaving chest, sobbing lips, and two tiny little hands, all clinched and stained with green moss. Poor little child!—empires have been lost with fewer tears than you shed for your fancied grief that day."

I feel helpless in his hands—humiliated and ashamed. Every moment he shows me that he is aware of my foolish unasked-for love, and seems to be half laughing at it. For an instant I long to flame up passionately at him—to declare that he is quite wrong in thinking it is in his power to make me either miserable or happy: but a childish terror of offending him restrains me.

At this moment Lady Cecil rises from the table, and whilst I am in doubt, anger, tribulation, all vexedly combined, a hand takes mine with soft pressure. I meet the blue eyes of my Greek hero, all melting in tenderness, and my vexation clears off like a summer mist from the hills, letting in full sunshine once more to my simple heart.

I should be quite content to be left alone in a corner of the drawing-room, pondering over my happiness; but Lady Cecil comes up and speaks to me. Oh! I am not one whit jealous of her now, with her beautiful face and beaming smiles, her shimmering satins and cloudy lace, nor the gems with which her golden hair is pranked.

A few kind graceful words spoken, she glides off, leaving me to the care of a stout, kind old lady, all ablaze with diamonds. Many questions this latter asks me, with manner and conversation so homely and pleasant, that I lose the awe I have previously entertained of her, from the knowledge that she is a countess. I may be pardoned for forgetting what she said to me, and what I responded on that eventful evening; and, indeed, I scarcely think the narration would add much to the brilliancy or effect of this simple chronicle. I know the time seems rather long until the gentlemen join us, and I wonder mentally how they can possibly drink any more after the liberal potations with which they have been served at dinner. When they do come in, Mr. Carruthers makes straight for the sofa on which I am sitting, and takes his place beside me.

"Dinner was awfully long, wasn't it?" he commences, in a half whisper.

"It did not seem long to me," I say, blurting out the truth in a most unfashionable manner.

"Perhaps you were so well amused," he remarks shortly.

"I don't know that I was particularly *amused*," I say, feeling the word is very inexpressive of the delicious emotions I had enjoyed during the feast.

"Interested, then?" he suggests, not quite good-humoredly; and observing that he is gnawing his mustache, I wonder if it *is* a sign, as Wilfred says, that he is not pleased.

"Yes," I answer.

"Won't you share your pleasure, and tell me what you found so entertaining?" he asks.

"I—I hardly remember," answer I, trying to think what part of our talk is suitable for repetition to him. "I think it was about being miserable, and the world disappointing one."

"A cheerful subject," utters Mr. Carruthers, dryly; "a very favorite one of my brother's. I hope you do not share his views, Miss Keane?—it is a little early in life for you to have found out that all is vanity."

"Oh! no, indeed, I am very happy," I hasten to say.

"So you ought to be, or it would be very unfair. I know you are pretty, and I am sure you are good. You are young and strong, to judge from the way you danced the other night, so it would be very odd if you wanted to abuse the world. I think it's an awfully jolly place."

"But I don't think he meant to abuse the world!" I exclaim, hastening to take up the gauntlet for my hero; "but—but if people are very clever and have great minds, they can't help, I suppose, being disappointed sometimes."

Just a shade of bitterness comes into my listener's eyes—it is

only a shade, for they are the kindest eyes in the world. Then he laughs.

"I should like to have you for a champion," he says; then gravely, "Miss Keane, you have a very tell-tale face."

"I!"

"Yes. I was watching you at dinner."

A vexed feeling creeps over me, being very doubtful as to what he may have read in my face; and I am induced to wish he had confined his attentions to Lady Flora.

"I hate being watched," I say, pettishly.

"Do you? Then I am sorry I watched you."

"Oh! if it amused you," I rejoin," rather superciliously.

It is very odd, but I can say sharp things to this man, who is always kind to me, without caring if I offend him or not; and I don't dare venture a word to his brother, even when he vexes me most. I suppose it is because one seems the life of my life, and I should not be very unhappy to think I was never going to see the other again.

"Are you staying here to-night?" asks Mr. Carruthers presently.

"Yes."

"And do you return home to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"How are you going? Excuse an impertinent question."

"Lady Cecil was good enough to send for me. I—I dare say —she——-"

"Because I should so like to take you on my coach. It's coming over for me to-morrow?"

I color with pleasure.

"Oh, how very kind of you!" I exclaim eagerly. "I should so like it."

"Would you really?"

"Oh, indeed I should."

"Then we'll manage it somehow;" and he looks so kind and glad. Really he is very handsome, I think.

If I have an ambition in my life it is to ride on a drag, little as I ever expected it to be gratified.

At this moment Wilfred Carruthers comes up to us.

"Lady Cecil wants you, Vivian."

If ever a man's countenance expressed "d—n it!" the elder Mr. Carruthers' does at this moment.

"What for?" he asks, with a shade of irritation.

"To ask Lady Flora to sing," says Wilfred a little maliciously.

His brother rises stiffly. If he does not alter the expression of his face before he reaches Lady Flora I should hardly think his request will be granted. I suppose he does, for Lady Flora goes to the piano and sings a very sparkling little French song. Mr. Carruthers stands beside her, looking politely sulky; and when it is over, does not ask her to sing another. She rises haughtily, and returns to her seat, feigning to overlook the arm he extends.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A PICNIC.

"Il est naturel a la femme de n'estimer que ce qu'elle aime, parceque l'impression qui la fait vibrer est la loi de son judgement; parceque son intelligence tres peu synthetique est inhabile a voir le vrai independamment de ce qui la touche."

"WHAT made you look so pleased just now?" whispers Wilfred in my ear.

"Oh!" I answer with enthusiasm, "you brother was so very kind—he said he would take me home to-morrow on his coach."

"Charming!" sneers Wilfred. "That's the beauty of being rich—one can pander to the little vanities of women, and that's the way straight to their hearts."

"Oh! no, no!" I cry, eagerly, vexed because he is vexed. "One does not love a man a bit better because he is rich, and can give one luxuries one is not used to."

"*Tu crois?*" he says, incredulously.

"I would rather," I exclaim, vehemently, "walk all my life with some one I loved than ride in the Queen's carriage with any one else."

Wilfred smiles compassionately.

"Little simpleton!" he says. "You would rather trudge through life with the man you fancied than ride on a coach with the one who fancied you? Take my word for it, child, it is much better to sweep by, with your prancing horses kicking up the dirt into the poor pedestrian's eyes, than to plod along footsore and bemired on the great highway. Undergo all hardships for love's sake, theoretically, if you please, *ca passe le temps*, but practically don't turn away a chance of placing yourself well in the world."

His tone is bitter, and I do not quite see the drift of his words; but somehow I feel pained and mortified.

"Miss Keane," says Lady Cecil, coming up, "we want to hear you sing. Will you let Mr. Carruthers take you to the piano?"

An agony of nervousness seizes me at the bare idea of singing before all these people; but I scarcely dare refuse to obey the behest of my hostess."

"I—I sing so very little," I stammer.

"You forget we have heard you," she says, smiling. "Mr. Carruthers," and she turns to Wilfred, "can't you join your persuasion to mine?"

He rises, giving me his arm. I dare not disobey that intimation, and am led like a lamb to the slaughter. Mr. Carruthers the elder is still standing by the piano, still gnawing his mustache.

"Are you going to sing?" he says, bending down to me.

"I am going to try," I answer, trembling all over like a leaf, and feeling as if I should never control my fingers sufficiently to strike a preliminary chord.

"Don't be nervous," he whispers kindly; "you are sure to do it all right."

Quite sure, with him standing one side and Wilfred the other, particularly as I look up and catch a haughty, contemptuous glance from Lady Flora. I stumble through the song somehow. Mr. Carruthers begs for another, and presses me so urgently, that I am compelled to comply. Wilfred has betaken himself in a pet to Lady Cecil, and every now and then I see her eyes wandering to his brother, in a way that makes me think of the report my sisters mentioned of her having been in love with him before her marriage.

When I have sung the second song, Vivian Carruthers takes me to a sofa quite at the end of the room, and seats himself by me.

"Do you know," he says in a whisper, "I never heard any one whose singing gave me so much pleasure as yours?"

I am confused, and do not know what answer to make. I cannot parry the compliment—the tone of it is too sincere, so I can only imagine that he knows nothing at all about the matter.

"You won't forget your promise to let me drive you home to-morrow?" he says; and then I remember Miss Carlton.

"I—I came with Miss Carlton," I reply; "and I—perhaps——" (this, feeling a little dubious on the score of the proprieties).

"Oh! I'll settle all that," he says. "Miss Carlton and I are very old friends. And I'll appeal to Lady Cecil if we mayn't do without a chaperon that little distance."

Lady Cecil is coming toward us. She has a smile on her face, but somehow it looks a little forced, even to my uninitiated eyes.

"Mr. Carruthers," she says sweetly, "will you be very angry if I take you away from Miss Keane for a moment? I want to consult you about a picnic to-morrow. We thought of going over to Feltham; and Lady Flora and I propose to do you the honor of sitting behind your team."

"I—I should have been charmed," he answers, rather awkwardly—"but——"

"Oh! pray don't mind me," I exclaim, eagerly, getting crimson with confusion.

"Am I disturbing some prearranged plan?" says Lady Cecil, with a haughty elevation of the brows, though her lips still smile.

"I—I—the fact is," blurts out Mr. Carruthers, "I asked Miss Keane to let me drive her home to-morrow, if you and Miss Carlton thought it *en regle*."

"But indeed—indeed I would *much* rather not!" I cry eagerly, horrified at the thought of offending my hostess. "I do not care the least about it—pray, pray, don't think of me."

"Perhaps Miss Keane will stay and join the party?" utters Lady Cecil, so icily that I could not have taken advantage of the invitation, however eagerly I might desire it.

"No, thank you," I hasten to reply; "I—I could not possibly stay."

"Do," urges Mr. Carruthers, with true manly want of tact; "then it will be all right, and I can take you home afterward."

"Will you come and speak to Lady Flora about it?" says Lady Cecil, meaningly; and he perforce rises and accompanies her to the other end of the room. Then Wilfred, coming back to me, never once leaves my side all the rest of the evening; and I go to bed at last intoxicated with delight at all the sweet pleasant things he has said to me, dashed with just a shade of concern at Lady Cecil's displeasure, as the inevitable thorn to the rose.

Several of the guests are staying in the house, and we assemble at breakfast in the morning quite a large party. Lady Cecil is very gracious, and insists on my staying for the picnic—this time with an urgency I cannot refuse. She is all smiles and pleasant words. I don't understand feminine finesse yet, so take all her sweetness in simple faith.

It is quite settled, she tells me. The picnic-party start at noon. We are to be back at the house for an unceremonious dinner at seven, and afterward Mr. Carruthers is to drive me home—for the propriety of which arrangement she will hold herself responsible. A messenger is to be sent to tell them at the farm not to expect me before nine or ten o'clock. I am in high glee at the prospect of such a delightful day, and can scarcely find words to express my pleasure. Just before we go to dress, my hostess comes up to me, radiant with smiles.

"Miss Keane," she says, bewitchingly, "Sir Marmaduke insists on driving you to Feltham in his phaeton. He is so urgent, that I am obliged to come and press his suit, though I really feel quite jealous."

Oh! why have I such a miserable, provoking face? I would give the world to make it look delighted, and I feel it falling, falling, till it is as long as a fiddle, as Hepzibah would say, with her elegant terseness. Lady Cecil must see my vexation, and despise me for my *gaucherie* and want of courteous control; and Wilfred Carruthers, who is just behind her, must see it too, for he wears a mocking smile that makes me ten times worse.

"Sir Marmaduke is very kind," I murmur. "I shall be delighted." And then Lady Cecil says, gayly:

"Remember, I shall have my eye upon you. Beware of making yourself too charming," and she runs off to don her elegant attire, and I go to my room to put on my straw hat and muslin *fichu*, with a dreary feeling that the brightness of the day is gone.

It is not that I am disappointed about the coach, but I had so hoped to be somewhere in sight of Wilfred Carruthers, where my poor eager ears could drink in a word from him now and then. In my foolish exultation at his notice, I had fancied he *would* arrange to be near me.

When I come down-stairs, the coach is at the door, with the four beautiful thoroughbreds pawing up the gravel. The gentlemen of the party are all assembled, but the ladies have not yet appeared.

"It's too bad," whispers Mr. Carruthers, coming up to me with clouded brow—"I had quite counted on taking you——"

"Yes, I'm very sorry," I reply genuinely.

"Never mind. I shall look forward ever so to this evening. It's awfully pleasant driving these summer nights."

Wilfred is out on the steps, but he neither speaks to nor looks at me, and my chagrin deepens. Lady Cecil and Lady Flora come out, looking indescribably elegant in their exquisite toilets, and prepare, with much laughing and lively chat, to mount to their seats. They do not notice me, and I feel so small, and as if I did not belong to their set, as well-bred women have a knack of making those they consider *mezzoceto* feel when they choose.

Lady Cecil occupies the box seat—I never saw her look so radiant or happy; and Wilfred is hovering about her with a tender solicitude for her comfort that goes straight to my foolish heart. I stand there feeling mortified, fancying too, with the innocent egotism of youth, that every one is thoroughly cognizant of my discomfiture.

Wilfred mounts just behind Lady Cecil; Captain Carlyle on the other side, with Lady Flora in the middle. I think Mr. Carruthers sees how embarassed and awkward I feel, for he comes up and whispers to me:

"We shall be there in an hour."

"Come, Carruthers," cries Sir Marmaduke, "take your ribbons and start, or we shall be all day getting off."

Thus apostrophized, Mr. Carruthers takes the reins with a kind, parting smile, for which I feel grateful, climbs up into his seat, and off fly the leaders, without a slack inch of harness between them and the wheelers. The barouche comes up; Lord and Lady Elsleigh with Miss Carlton take their seats in it; two or three gentlemen follow on horseback, and then Sir Marmaduke's mail phaeton dashes up. I am helped in by the footman, and my host mounts slowly the other side.

Fortunately for me he is a great talker, and the companion who pleases him best is a good listener; so I am quite sure of being agreeable to him to-day. Not for all the world could I originate or sustain conversation. My heart is heavy. I am straining my eyes along the white road for one glimpse of the coach which is carrying away from me all I care for. And I feel the whole time that I am foolish and ungrateful for the wonderful good luck that has befallen me. I, a poor little country girl, until lately leading the simplest, most rustic life, to be brought suddenly amongst these great fashionable people and noticed by them; to be the object of kind attentions from Mr. Carruthers, to be driving side by side with Sir Marmaduke Cecil, the proudest man in the county.

Was ever such a piece of good fortune? And was ever good fortune leavened with so much bitterness?

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE MAN I LOVE—THE MAN WHO LOVES ME.

"Ah! many a shaft at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant."

I SIT nervous and erect, anxious to hear and reply to all that is said to me, not for the world would I seem uncourteous to

one who has shown me so much condescension. I try to laugh at his stories, to be interested in his conversation, as we drive along the green hedge-rows and under the long elm avenues that shade us pleasantly from the midday sun. We turn a corner and come close upon the coach; the grooms have got down to alter a curb-chain, or something of the sort. My pulse quickens. It is some pleasure to be near them; but Sir Marmaduke pulls up short.

"We'll wait for them," he says. "We don't want their dust."

And I try to smile feebly, and say that dust is very unpleasant.

"That's the one thing I like London for," says Sir Marmaduke. "They water the roads—not but what they do it as badly as they can, so that the mud cakes on one's new paint and ruins it. Ah, they manage things very differently in Paris," etc., etc.

Mr. Carruthers looks round, and brandishes his whip at us by way of salutation, and off they start again, Lady Cecil's musical laughter ringing in the air. The drive seems long, though we go at a good pace; but we get at last to the little inn where the carriages put up, and dismount. Mr. Carruthers comes to help me out, putting both his strong arms round me and lifting me out like a little child. I see an impatient flash in the eyes of Lady Cecil, who is standing by, and wish devoutly he would devote his *petits soins* to her, and not give offense by looking after me, who don't a bit appreciate his attentions. We have to cross a stile on our way to the woods; here I get the advantage of the fair aristocrats, for their unaccustomed limbs are stiff and awkward, while mine from frequent practice are nimble.

"Over like a bird!" says Mr. Carruthers, with his abominable want of tact, as I alight on the other side; and Lady Flora, and Lady Cecil, who hear him, curl their lip contemptuously.

"Stile vaulting is Miss Keane's natural element," utters Wilfred, in a tone that makes me color and feel painfully small, while his brother retorts, sharply:

"Miss Keane does everything well in its turn."

I don't want his championship—he is only making me odious in the eyes of every one else, but I do feel it hard that Wilfred should take arms against me.

Mr. Carruthers still lingers beside me, though the other ladies turn frequently to speak to him, in a manner so pointed that I cannot conceive why he does not go forward; they neither look at nor address a word to me.

"I wish you would go and walk with Lady Cecil," I say at last, desperately.

"Why?" he asks, quickly.

"Because I am sure you ought to do so. She expects it, and —and—I can walk very well by myself."

He looks at me with his frank eyes, rather an indignant, hurt look.

"Do you mean in plain words that you don't care for my company?"

"No," I answer, bluntly, for I have no *mauvaise honte* with

him. "Only you ought to be talking to them, not to a little nobody like me."

"I suppose a woman can't be more than pretty and sweet-mannered, and a lady," he retorts, in quick defense of me against myself.

"Yes," I say, but not bitterly, "one can be beautiful and elegant, and splendidly dressed, and a lady of title."

"Are you really so modest?" he asks, looking kindly at me, "or do you speak so because you are a little vexed?"

"Vexed!" I retort, quickly, "why should I be vexed?"

"I don't know," he answers, rather awkwardly; and at this juncture Lady Cecil turns round for the tenth time.

"Mr. Carruthers, this path is so steep, I want your arm."

Of course he goes forward—not with the best grace in the world, as there are four gentlemen with her, either of whose arms would be strong enough to support her.

"Do you think me a great bore?" I hear her whisper, as she looks up in his face. Oh! I am quite sure now she is in love with him, or she could not look so at him.

"Lady Cecil can never be anything but charming," he returns, with cold politeness; and I see her bite her lips with mortification, and half draw her hand from his arm.

Lady Flora is leaning on Wilfred; I am bringing up the rear, feeling very small, very much as if nobody wanted me. I would give the world to be at home, or lying solitary in the Southcote Woods, where I could not feel humiliated. Captain Carlyle turns and sees me looking, I dare say, very glum, on coming back, politely offers me an arm. I decline it—it would be affectation for a little rustic, accustomed to clambering, to give herself fine lady airs.

We soon reach our destination, where lunch is already spread under a clump of trees, and are joined by the rest of the party, who come up at a slow pace. I am planted between Sir Marmaduke and Lord Elsleigh, both of whom are very polite and kind to me. The ladies, with the exception of Miss Carlton, take not the slightest notice of me, but carefully exclude me from their conversation, as well-bred women know so well how to do, without making the slight too apparent. Lady Elsleigh of course follows suit to her daughter.

I could almost laugh, if I were not so sensitive and mortified, to think of the cause of all this high dudgeon against me. I cannot avoid seeing that it is on account of Mr. Carruthers' notice of me, which I should be much happier without, and do not in the least value. All I want to make me supremely happy is an occasional kind word or glance from Wilfred; and he takes no more notice of me than if I were a thousand leagues away.

I look miserably in my plate of raised pie, chasing the morsels round and round, unable to eat for the choking sensation in my throat. When I do look up, I catch Mr. Carruthers' eye, but never once his brother's. Wilfred is seated next to Lady Cecil, and they are laughing and whispering together all lunch time. I wonder if she is trying to pique Mr. Carruthers; she flirts so openly, that it puzzles me how Sir Marmaduke can sit so pa-

tiently, heaping his plate with dainties, and apparently unconscious of the existence of any one but himself.

At last the *al fresco* meal is over, to my great relief; and the gentlemen of the party being permitted, or rather incited thereto by the ladies, light their cigars. They all appoint to meet on the same spot at five o'clock, for tea, when a fire is to be lighted, and a kettle boiled on sticks. Then they stroll off in pairs to look at the view from different spots, and presently I find myself left alone with Sir Marmaduke and Lord Elsleigh, who are engaged in some deeply-engrossing political question. I feel altogether *de trop*—in every one's way, so, rising, I plunge into a thicket of trees a little to the left, and wander away I know not where, until I am well out of sight and hearing of the other members of the party.

It is a solitary enough spot, with the dead leaves of many foregone years lying thick under the trees, and a heavy shade of interlaced boughs branching overhead, through which not one sun-ray penetrates. My heart is full of bitterness, for Wilfred Carruthers and Lady Cecil are strayed away together: and have I not read in the bitterness of his glance that he loves her? Oh! what a little simpleton was I to dream for one instant that I could be the rival of such a woman as that! This, then, is a glimpse of the great world that looks so joyous and tempting to those beyond its pale—this is how the apples taste that hang ripe and tempting from their green boughs—these are the heart-aches that are gilded over by the pomp and pride of life!

Crouched under the shelter of the big trees I sit, quite still and mute from very pain. In all my life I never longed so keenly for anything as I do this moment to be home again, away from all these great people, who make me feel so miserable. A long time passes—a very long time, it seems to me; but having no watch, I cannot tell how the sands are running from the hour-glass. A drowsiness creeps over me; I fall asleep.

When I awake, it is because some one utters my name, and I unclose my eyes, unconscious, for the moment, where I am. A kind face greets my awakening with such an eager look upon it as it bends over me, that I start up, scarcely comprehending its intensity, and overcome by a sense of confusion.

"Miss Keane," says Vivian Carruthers, "are you not coming to tea?"

"Tea!" I echo; then recollecting myself—"Oh! yes. I—I think I must have fallen asleep."

"I could not make up my mind to wake you for a long time," he says, stretching out his hand to raise me—"you looked so very peaceful and happy."

"Did I?" I reply, wearily; "then it would have been kind to let me sleep on. I think one is happiest asleep."

"I don't like to hear you talk like that," he says, kindly. "Life ought to be all *couleur de rose* at your age."

"So it is," I answer, with an attempt at gayety.

"I have been awfully bored all the afternoon," he remarks,

presently. "I would have given anything to be here with you."

"I don't think you would have found me very good company," I reply, bluntly.

"No?" interrogatively. "*I* think the simple presence of some one one likes very much is happiness," he utters, in a low voice.

"*I* think the absence of those one cares for is misery," I blurt out, desperately.

Mr. Carruthers looks at me, and I quicken my pace that he may not see my shifting color.

"Don't be in such a hurry," he says, in a pleading voice.

"We must not be late for tea," I respond, ruthlessly, hurrying all the more.

The whole party is assembled when we reach the spot. I am the subject of more contemptuous looks, and begin to resign myself to being obnoxious in every one's eyes to-day. As we are all sitting tailor-fashion at our tea, Vivian Carruthers by my side this time, a new personage appears on the scene, in the shape of my old friend the gypsy. She catches sight of me at once, and comes up with her wheedling smile, as though I were an old acquaintance.

"Good-day to you, pretty lady," she commences, apostrophizing me, to my dire confusion. "You haven't forgot the poor old gypsy, that told you your fortune for nothing, have ye now?"

I wish the earth would open and swallow me, or better still, her; but it remains *terra firma*, and I crimson painfully under the general gaze directed to me.

"In the corn-fields, you know, my pretty miss, when you hadn't your purse, and the old gypsy told you your fortune all for nothing," persists the hag.

Oh, dear! oh, dear! if I had the hoarded contents of my cedar money-box with me, I would give it her all to go away; but I haven't a farthing.

"Let's have our fortunes told," said Mr. Carruthers, coming to my rescue.

"It's a good fortune yours is, my noble lord, though it isn't in your face, like the pretty little lady's here," says the horrid old woman, eagerly; and the gentlemen laugh, while the two beauties look disdainful. "Let the old gypsy cross your hand!" she continues, her eyes glistening at sight of the large silver coin Mr. Carruthers has produced. "You ask the young lady, my lord, if I didn't tell her true. I told her she was goin' to meet a grand gentleman, that 'ud take a fancy to her; and I told her he'd have beautiful blue eyes and light hair, though she would have it it was blue eyes and dark hair."

I could cry with mortification; and Mr. Carruthers seeing my discomfiture, tries his best to avoid general attention from me.

"There," he says, giving her a half crown, and holding out his hand, "tell me *my* fortune, and never mind the young lady's."

"Vivian," I hear uttered in Wilfred's languid, scornful voice,

"how can you lend yourself to such folly? This ignorant rant is not particularly entertaining."

"Pray don't interrupt the oracle," sneers Lady Cecil. "Perhaps the creature will tell him something he wants to hear."

I see the gypsy fix her eyes with an indignant glitter on the two speakers; then she turns to Mr. Carruthers, peering attentively in his hand.

I suppose this vagrant race of fortune tellers are wonderfully quick observers, and have a knack of making shrewd guesses at what is going on around them. After a very hasty glance:

"You're born to good luck, my lord," mutters the crone; "and well your lordship deserves it. But there's a cross I see here, and other people 'ull get the things as you want the most, and won't care about 'em."

"What do I want most?" he asks, laughing.

The gypsy gives a knowing chuckle, and a glance all round the party.

"You wants a pretty lady that isn't a hundred miles away from your side; and she's full o' some one as isn't fit to black your lordship's shoes"—(this with a vindictive glance at Wilfred); "and there's a beautiful lady as is very sweet on your lordship, though she has tied a knot with her tongue she can't untie with her teeth, and you don't care a brass button about her." And this time she directs a piercing look at Lady Cecil, who absolutely starts and colors.

"Are we to be treated to *much* more of this rodomontade?" asks Lady Flora, with a sneer.

"That will do—that will do!" exclaims Mr. Carruthers, hastily, giving her another half-crown. "Go along, my good woman, we don't want to hear any more."

"Won't the beautiful ladies have their fortunes told?" says the gypsy, in her wheedling voice, going round to the other side, and wreathing her old brown face with fascinating smiles.

"Go!" utters Wilfred, peremptorily, "before I call the servants to turn you off."

"Going, sir, going," she answers, in an excited tone. "I won't trouble the ladies no more. Perhaps there's something I could do for you when I go down south to the sea-coast next week. Shall I take a message to some one as is looking for you?"

A sudden livid pallor comes over Wilfred's face. Every one stares at him in astonishment; but in a moment he recovers himself, and, as the gypsy turns away with a malicious grin on her face, he says, in his sarcastic tones:

"Charming episode for our *al fresco* tea! It wouldn't have been perfect without the kettle boiled on sticks, and the vagabond foreteller of destiny. Pray, Miss Keane, have you many acquaintances among the tribe?"

How can he be so cruel? How have I ever hurt or vexed him, that he should put me to such wanton torture?

Vivian jumps up quickly.

"It's time the horses were being put to. Are you ladies nearly ready? Miss Keane, let me help you up;" and out of pure

kindness he continues to pay me marked attention, which I would a thousand times rather be without, and renders me more than ever hateful to the other women.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE IRONY OF FORTUNE.

"Who ne'er have loved and loved in vain
Can neither feel nor pity pain,
The cold repulse, the look askance,
The lightning of Love's angry glance.

"My wounded soul, my bleeding breast,
Can patience preach thee into rest?
Alas! too late, I dearly know
That joy is harbinger of woe."

I AM consigned to Sir Marmaduke's care again for the drive back to Lofton Park. Lady Cecil is devoting herself entirely to Wilfred Carruthers, leaning back in her seat to look up at him while he bends over her, whispering in her ear and gazing at her with an intensity that makes me sick at heart. What have I done since yesterday that he is so changed toward me? He cannot be vexed too because his brother notices me. He must know that I have not a thought in the world for any one but him. No, I tell myself bitterly, the reason of his coldness is at hand—I need not seek it far—he is really in love with Lady Cecil, though she is the wife of another man; and to me he is utterly, utterly indifferent.

Can I not summon pride to my aid? Is it not unworthy to be grieving and longing after some one who cares nothing for me? I *can't* help it. In my poor contemptible foolishness, I could crouch at his feet for one kind word, in spite of his cruelty.

Happy am I when dinner is over, and I am equiped for the moonlight ride home on the drag. The gentlemen come out to see us off; so does Miss Carlton; the other ladies will not even look out of the windows at our departure, and Wilfred remains with them.

Lady Cecil gives me two cold fingers at parting. I want to thank her for my visit, but the words die away in my throat. Lady Elsleigh and her daughter make me a distant bow, and Wilfred Carruthers rises from his lounging-chair by Lady Cecil, and gives me an inclination of the head. I hasten out of the room in an agony, lest the tears that are blinding my eyes should fall. At the door I dash them away hastily, and then I am out on the steps, Sir Marmaduke shaking me kindly by the hand, and hoping I shall soon come again. Lord Elsleigh gives me a hearty grasp. Captain Carlyle and the two other men help me up on the coach, with many pleasant words and little cares for my comfort.

Mr. Carruthers mounts, and we are off at a brisk trot through the park.

"What a heavenly night! I wish my horses were fresh, and

we had a twenty mile drive before us," he says, looking down at me. "Are you quite comfortable? Do you like being up here?"

"Oh! it's delightful!" I respond; and so it is, or would be, if my heart were not so sore. I am so high up, that I can look across the high hedges at the country lying bathed in moonlight, and we cut swiftly through the soft summer air, fragrant with all rich scents of ripe vegetation.

"I'm afraid you haven't had a very pleasant time of it," he says, in a low voice; and I answer coldly:

"Indeed I have enjoyed myself extremely," for I feel ruffled at the bare thought of any one guessing how intense the wretchedness of that day has been.

"Oh! have you?" he answers. "I was afraid——" and there he stops.

"Afraid of what?" I ask, sharply.

"Oh! I don't know. Women are so odd," and he turns his face away, and gives the near leader a flick with the whip, which it resents violently. Presently he pulls up into a walk. "It's such a short drive," he says. "We shall be at the farm in no time."

I begin to feel a sense of self-reproach. How good he has been to me! and I have made a very ungracious return hitherto.

"It is very kind of you to take me home," I begin, anxious to make an amend.

"It is very pleasant to do the thing one likes best, and then get thanked for it," he answers, turning to me.

Though I do not care a bit for him, I think he has the very kindest, honestest eye I ever saw; and he is undeniably handsome, though so unlike to my ideal.

"I should like always to go about on a coach," I say, with a view of being conversational, and not with any ulterior motive.

"So should I like you to—on this one," and his blue eyes glance at me ever so tenderly in the strong white light.

My hand is lying ungloved on the big leather apron. Suddenly he shifts the reins to his right hand, and takes mine in his left. An agony of repulsion, or something, seizes me, and I drag it away, gasping out:

"Don't!"

Quickly he shifts the reins back again. I see him gnawing his chestnut mustache, and he says, sitting bolt upright, and in the iciest tone:

"I beg you ten thousand pardons!"

But his fit of temper, if temper it is, is soon over, and he begins to talk on ordinary subjects, so that I recover my composure without difficulty. We are in the lane leading to our house now. I feel sorry the drive is coming to an end, for it has been very pleasant.

"Will you let me come and take you out again some day?" he asks. "Of course with Mr. or Mrs. Keane, or your sisters. I cannot hope to have you all to myself another time."

"I should like it better than anything," I answer. And then we drive up to the front gate, and all the family come out to meet us.

Mr. Carruthers insists on being introduced to every one; and when invited, actually dismounts and comes into the drawing-room. He chats to papa about some horses that are to be seen next week ten miles off, and proposes to drive him over to see them.

"We must prevail upon the young ladies to come too," he adds, "and then we'll all go afterward and lunch at the Fighting Cock at Ridley."

My sisters acquiesce with effusion. I remain silent, though he looks very hard at me. But I don't want to be selfish, and think I have had more than my share of gayety (so-called).

"Will you trust yourself to my coachmanship again?" says Mr. Carruthers, addressing me.

"Oh! thank you," I stammer; "but—but I—I have been out so much, and—and my sisters——"

"There is plenty of room for every one," he returns, quickly, almost imperatively; "and I shall be quite disappointed if you don't come."

"Of course you will go, Doris," says my mother, "if Mr. Carruthers is so kind as to wish it." And my sisters look a little vexed, I can see, though they are smiling.

When he has taken his leave, every one pounces upon me with a thousand questions, which I answer with the best of my ability.

"How you *must* have enjoyed yourself!" chime my sisters, with an intensity of envy. I don't mean unkind envy, but longing for similar good fortune. "To have met all those grand people, for them to notice you; and the idea of Sir Marmaduke driving you himself, and then Mr. Carruthers bringing you home. Why, you must have been crazy with delight."

I could almost laugh to myself—not a glad or joyous laugh—to think how fortune has smiled on me, to all appearance, and yet frowned so with the other side of her Janus face, that I have lost all sight of pleasure.

Then come a thousand more questions, as to the house, its appointments, the rooms, decorations, dinner, servants, liveries, etc.

"Was Mr. Carruthers' brother there?" asks Fanny; "and did he *go on* as much as usual with Lady Cecil?"

The last feather breaks the camel's back.

"I am so tired!" I exclaim, rising abruptly; "let me go to bed now, and I will tell you everything you want to know to-morrow."

So I betake myself to my doll's bed; and my last feeling at night, before going to sleep, and my first on waking in the morning, is a bitter sense of disappointment and failure.

## CHAPTER XXI.

EGO.

"But perhaps hereafter,
When she shall learn how heartless is the world,
A voice within her will repeat my name,
And she will say, 'He was indeed my friend.' "

Is the gentle reader beginning to weary of the ever recurring personal pronoun, and to think he has heard overmuch of the agonies of calf-love, that moral measels common to adolescence? Simple loves of simple hearts are truly old-fashioned and tame in these days; the recital of legitimate pains and passions palls on the popular taste. If a gentle sympathy creeps into some tender heart over the narration of these childish sufferings, it will surely be because it knows of its own experience how sore and deep are the pangs that older, more world-worn folk make light of.

Three days have passed since my return from Lofton Park—the subject of my visit has been worn threadbare, my sisters have asked every conceivable question, and I have answered to the best of my ability. They are still of opinion that I am the most fortunate creature in the world; that my happiness during my two days' stay must have been transcendental. I do not care to undeceive them.

On the afternoon of the third day, I take my way across the fields once more to the Southcote Woods. No thought have I of seeing any one there, and no desire. I only want to indulge a little private melancholy, a luxury not very attainable at home. To the big oak I wend my way, and sit calmly down beneath its generous shade. No paroxysms to-day; no tornado of grief; only the sense of an unfilled want in my life—the pain of a love thrown back upon itself. Being older and wiser, the attentions of a rich elder brother who is kind and handsome besides, would have gone far to compensate for the indifference of the object of any particular fancy—in the inconsequence of my misguided youth they do not fill one crevice of the chasm.

I have only been seated a very few minutes, when footsteps pause close beside me, and a voice says:

"You have come back to your old haunts, then?"

Wilfred's voice, but it chafes and angers me to-day—the tone is one of slighting familiarity.

Not one word do I find to answer.

"Did you come to look for me?" he asks, throwing himself beside me on the grass, smiling the smile that I hate.

"No," I answer indignantly; "I did not."

"*Qu'as-tu, mon enfant?* he murmurs, lazily stretching out a hand to take mine; but I drag it away, and say coldly, in spite of the choking in my throat.

"I don't understand French."

That is not true, but I am so angry that I would say anything for the sake of being captious and contradictory.

"*Pauvrette!*" he says smiling, "it ought to be at school, then,

conning its French grammar in a pinafore, instead of wasting the precious time studying nature in these pretty woods. Passive nature won't teach you much, *chere belle.*"

I grow hot and cold by turns—ah! if I had but a ready wit and a quick tongue, that I might say something to hurt and wound *him.*

"If my ignorance offends you, why don't you leave me?" I cry with a swelling throat and foolish tears in my eyes.

"So I will, if you wish it," he returns coldly, making a movement as if to rise.

Oh! I can't part with him so—the bare thought of his going makes me humble in a moment.

"I don't mean that," I say nervously, "but—but—if I am so *very* stupid——"

"Who says you are stupid, little one?" he asks in a kinder voice, taking my hand, unrepulsed this time.

"You," I pout.

"Did I? I think not. I never say what I don't mean. Come, tell me—how did you like your first glimpse of the world?"

"Very much," I falter.

"That's not true, little one," he answers, looking steadily in my face; "are you such an apt scholar as to have learnt dissimulation so soon? You were miserable nearly all the time."

"Why do you say that?" I ask indignantly.

"Because it is a fact. You see, my child, you have a very tell-tale face, and I have a gift of thought-reading; so, between the two, I arrive without much difficulty at the knowledge that you were miserable."

"If you are so clever, perhaps you know the reason," I say desperately.

"Oh! yes, I know that too," he answers. "Do you wish me to tell you?"

"Yes," I mutter defiantly.

"It was because I did not take any notice of you."

I start to my feet crimson with anger.

"I may be stupid and you may think me beneath you," I cry passionately, "but you have no right to insult me."

And I turn to go.

"Doris!"

I want to go, but the sound of his voice chains me to the spot.

"Well!" I utter fiercely.

"Come here, child, and sit down by me."

"No, I *won't.*"

"Yes, you will. I want to talk to you seriously."

I obey like a whipped spaniel.

"Do you think I say these things because I want to hurt you?" he asks tenderly.

"Yes," I answer, with candor.

Wilfred Carruthers sighs.

"I told you once, a long time ago, you did not understand me," he says sadly. "Why, child, you can't think so badly of me as

to believe I would make your very affection for me a means of wounding you?"

Oh! if I could only tell him with truth that he flatters himself too much, and that I have no affection for him. Instead of that I can only falter:

"I don't know."

"Might it not be for your own sake?" My eyes open and widen involuntarily. "I can't do you any good, child," he goes on; "if ever I marry it will be a woman with a lot of money, from dire necessity; and you see, if I were to hang about you, and engross your attention, it would only be keeping other men away."

"I don't want other men," I cry, passionately.

"Not now, perhaps; but you will some day. Why, you ought to think me immensely disinterested," he continues, with a laugh, not quite pleasant to hear. "Here I am throwing you into the arms of my own brother. Did I not keep out of his way when I saw he fancied you, and let him have you all to himself? You don't suppose it is to my interest that he should marry, and have heirs, do you? I ought to use my influence with you to lead him on, and throw him over, that he might take a pet at your sex, and vow eternal celibacy. Instead of that, I say, 'My dear child, here's a splendid chance for you—better than anything you could have anticipated in your wildest dreams—don't let it slip through your fingers. My brother has taken a fancy to you, which he is happily in a position to indulge. The fancy will probably grow. Play your cards well, and you are *en train* to make a splendid match."

I look steadfastly in his face while he says all this, in a flippant tone, and there comes across me a conviction that I might have loved something worthier than this man.

"If you cared for me," I falter, my eyes full of tears, "you could never advise me to—to think of any one else."

"That is because you regard life and human motives from a selfish and sordid point of view," he answers. "When a mind becomes elevated and enlarged, it is capable of sacrifices that small ones do not even comprehend sufficiently to believe."

I cannot argue with him, of course, but he does not convince me. If he had said, taking my hands in his, and looking into my eyes, "Child, I love you with all my heart. I cannot marry you, but for your sake I will leave you, that I may not make you unhappy," I could have fallen on my knees and worshiped him for his goodness. But his tone is flippant; he speaks like a man who knows he is sure to have the best of the argument, and who simply argues for the love of it.

"You do not love me," I say suddenly, almost frightened at my own temerity. "I do very well to amuse you when no one else is by. It is Lady Cecil whom you really love."

He darts a terrible glance at me; then, without one word, rising, he leaves me. For a moment I am chained to earth aghast at what I have done; then, springing to my feet, I dart after him. I cannot part from him in anger—oh! I feel in this moment that I love him with all my heart, whatever he may be

Let him lash me with bitter words—I have no right to retort. He shall be tyrant, and I the humblest of his slaves. With trembling hand I grasp his arm, crying:

"Forgive me, I did not mean it."

He makes no answer.

"Oh! do, do forgive me!" I implore.

"I have nothing to forgive," he returns, icily. "Your sex have always the privilege of uttering insults with impunity, and you use your privilege freely. A man one can deal with; with a woman the only refuge is in silence."

"I did not mean it," I say, humbly.

"I am glad to hear it," he answers, coldly. "I beg your pardon"—(removing my hand from his arm—"will you permit me to go?"

How can I fight against that icy coldness?—so I relax my hold on his arm, and stand in helpless misery while he strides haughtily away.

"What have I done?" I murmur. And when he is out of sight I fling myself down in a paroxysm of tears and sobs—the first since my birthday.

"What *is* the matter?" says a voice, tenderly; and I look up, startled to find Vivian Carruthers bending over me with anxious face. "Miss Keane, pray don't cry so."

I hide my face in my hands, quite indignant at his interference, and furious that he should see me in this evil plight.

"Do tell me?—has some one hurt or angered you? Won't you trust me?" says Mr. Carruthers, eagerly.

"There's nothing to tell," I answer, defiantly, trying to command my voice; "only that I am very silly."

"I'm sure you're not; you would not cry like that for nothing. Don't think me impertinent to force myself upon you at such a time, but if you only knew how it pains me to see *you* unhappy," and the kind voice becomes quite tremulous. But it does not touch me, only makes me indignant and inclined to vent my anger on him.

"I—I thought I might come here without having people to pry over me," I say bitterly. "Of course I forgot these woods belong to you; and I have no right to be here at all."

"You have a right to anything and everything that belongs to me," he answers, in a pained voice. "You might give me more credit than to think I would wantonly intrude on private feelings. If it had been any one but you I would have gone a dozen miles out of the way."

"It would have been much kinder if you had," I cry petulantly.

"Forgive what I am going to say," he utters, with hesitation, "but I just met my brother going away from this spot. Has he anything to do with your unhappiness?"

"What right have you to ask?" I exclaim, fiercely.

"Only the right of caring very much for you," he answers, humbly. "I would give anything to make you fond of me; but if I can't do that, I love you well enough to wish you to be

happy in your own way. You can't doubt my motives now. Tell me, I beg of you—do you love Wilfred?"

"It does not matter if I love him," I retort, bitterly; "he hates me."

"Hates you, child!" the hot blood flushing to his face. "As if any mortal man on the face of the earth could do that!"

"I tell you he does."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because he is cruel, and says hard things to me."

Mr. Carruthers utters an angry word under his breath, and I am smitten with sudden contrition for having spoken against the man I love.

"I don't mean it," I cry, quickly; "it was my own fault—I was to blame, not he."

A pained look comes into Vivian Carruthers' eyes.

"You do love him very much?" he says, slowly.

"You are very ungenerous," I cry, hotly. "What good does it do you to find out my secret and humble me by telling me of it?"

"I wish you understood me better," he says, gravely; "you would give me credit for something less unworthy than you do now."

"I know you are very good and kind," I answer penitently, "and I was very ungrateful to speak as I did. But you would forgive me if you only knew how miserable I am."

And I subside into helpless tears.

"You poor, dear little child!" he says, tenderly, "to think any one could have the heart to grieve you."

"No one has done anything to grieve me," I utter hastily, "it is only my own foolishness. You see," I continue, drying my eyes, and speaking in an apologetic tone, "I have lived all my life in the country, and never known any one but my own father and mother, and brothers and sisters, so I don't understand the ways of other people, and I fancy if they are not always quite—quite the same to me, that they are angry with me, and it makes me so very miserable."

"Tell me, child," he utters, smiling rather sadly, "would you be very miserable if you thought I was angry with you?"

I hang my head. I cannot tell a falsehood, and I have not learnt the art of polite prevarication.

"And yet," he says, stretching out one hand to me, a sudden mist of dimness growing in his kind blue eyes, "there is nothing in this world I would not do to save you an hour's pain, nothing in my possession I would not give in exchange for your love."

---

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE FATUITY OF YOUTH.

"Non," dit-elle. "Non, je ne veux plus aimer."
Mais que peut la volonte de la raison contre la volonte du cœur.

FOR months and months after that day I never once set eyes on Wilfred Carruthers. It is humiliating to confess that I still

care for him. After his treatment of me, I ought to have banished him from my heart forever and a day, have been ready to greet him with the cold smile of a cured heartache at our next meeting. I know that well enough. I scorn myself for being unable to conquer my folly, but all the same I go on pining, and being miserable about him throughout the long winter. Oh! how many and many a time I wish I had never seen him, or that at least I had known his brother first, and then all might have gone so smoothly, so well. Why—why was fate so perverse? Why should I love the man who is indifferent to me with all my foolish heart, and care nothing for the one who would heap every pleasure and luxury upon me, because I have grown so dear to him?

It seems wonderful that Vivian Carruthers should go on caring for me when I am so ungracious and indifferent to him; still he does, and is so kind and thoughtful, that it sometimes exasperates me to think no coldness can change him. He comes very often to the farm, constantly making up pleasant parties and picnics; taking us for drives on his drag. I always sit on the box seat beside him—he insists on that, and I confess to enjoying the pleasant autumn days; liking to be with him, except when an uneasy sense comes now and then across me that something is expected of me in return for all this. If only they would not leave me alone with him; but they do pertinaciously, and then, waxing pettish and irritable, I say sharp disagreeable things to him. I wish he would not be so patient and good, because it fills me with a sense of mortified shame, and that makes me more petulant than ever.

One day we drive fifteen miles to picnic in the ruins of an old abbey—quite a party of us, for Mr. Carruthers, with his usual thoughtfulness, has provided amusement for my sisters in the shape of three officers from Colton. Papa is chaperon, but has disappeared discreetly somewhere the moment lunch is over, the others are beginning to pair off. As Julia and Captain Edgehill are turning their backs upon us, I, springing to my feet, prepare to follow.

"Don't go," says Mr. Carruthers imploringly.

"Why?" I know it is disagreeable, and am angry with myself, but still I ask ruthlessly, with stolid voice, "Why?"

"Do you hate so to be alone with me?" he asks; and I answer in the same blank tone:

"Oh, no—why should I?"

A moment's silence, while I play an imaginary tune on the grass with my left hand, keeping my eyes fixed upon it as though seriously afraid of playing a wrong note.

"Doris!" I hear him utter in a troubled voice, and I look up fiercely, and say coloring:

"I beg your pardon, *Mr. Carruthers.*"

He rises then without a word, putting out his hand to raise me; but I pretend not to see it, and scramble unassisted to my feet.

On we walk in silence until we come to the broad stream shaded with trees that runs through the grounds formerly be-

longing to the abbey. Presently he points out the stump of an old tree.

"Sit down, won't you, Miss Keane?"

"I am not tired, thank you."

"But do sit down, I want to talk to you."

"We can talk just as well walking."

"No. we can't—at least I can't."

"Oh, very well—if you so particularly wish it," I respond ungraciously, getting more and more angry and ashamed of myself, consequently more and more disagreeable to my long-suffering companion. I sit down stiffly, and he extends himself at my feet.

"Mind my dress, please," I say, pulling it ostentatiously out of his way.

"I won't hurt it;" and then there is another pause, during which I look straight before me, getting gradually redder and redder as I feel his eyes fixed intently upon my face.

"I wish you wouldn't," I say at last petulantly.

"What, mayn't I have even the small satisfaction of looking at you?" he answers in an injured tone.

"No, not like that," I retort, snappishly.

"But you don't know how I was looking, because your eyes were gazing straight over my head."

"But one can feel," I begin, and pause.

"Can one?" he smiles; and then suddenly, seizing one of the hands that lie in my lap, he says so eagerly it frightens me:

"Can one?" I wish to heaven you *could* feel every time I looked at you—every time I thought of you—every time——"

I dart up from my seat filled with sudden terror. But in a moment he has pulled me down again on my seat, and I am pinioned there by his strong arms, while he says passionately:

"You shall hear me!"

His eager face is close to mine; a strange feeling of helpless terror overcomes me; I turn white and sick. All at once he releases me, and is standing beside me.

"What a brute I am! Do pray forgive me—Miss Keane—Doris—do speak to me!"

Somehow, without knowing why, I feel an increased respect for him—like him all the better for having frightened me a little.

"I don't know what to say," I respond, glancing up at him. "I am rather afraid of you."

"Afraid! As if I would hurt a hair of your beautiful head, child! But you don't understand——"

"No, I don't," I retort, rather injured.

A pause ensues, which is presently broken by Mr. Carruthers.

"Can't I do *any*thing to make you like me?"

"I do like you."

"But I don't want your *liking*."

"You said like."

"But I meant love."

"You should say what you mean, then," I answer, feeling uncomfortable, but speaking flippantly.

"Doris," he says in a low voice—"let me call you Doris this once—you know I love you with all my soul. Won't you try to love me—won't you tell me some way that I could make you love me?"

"I don't think you could," I respond, with rueful candor, "I'm sure I would give anything to be fond of you—it would be such a splendid thing for me."

He utters an angry little word under his breath.

"For Heaven's sake, child, don't you talk like that! Do let me believe there's one creature pure and disinterested enough not to value a man for what he has."

"I tell you I don't," exclaim I wrathfully; "and if you had all the world it would be just the same."

"Ah!" he says bitterly, "I see, then, that's meant for the unkindest cut of all; I'm such a beast, no amount of favorable externals could make me endurable."

"I didn't say anything of the sort," I returned. "You are very kind and good, and I am exceedingly grateful to you."

He makes an impatient gesture.

"Well, what *am* I to say?" querulously—"nothing pleases you."

"Say you will try to love me."

"It's no use telling stories," I utter helplessly. "I don't feel as if I ever should."

"Very well," he says, abruptly, "then that's settled; and so the less I force my distasteful presence upon you the better, I suppose. Don't let me detain you any longer;" and he stalks off, I following in the rear, discomfited and miserable, thinking how wretched it is to have any one fond of you if you don't reciprocate the feeling.

All the long drive home he scarcely speaks to me, and is very sharp with the grooms, a most unusual thing for him. But just as we get near home, he bends down and whispers:

"Don't think anything of what I said. I love you, and as long as you don't hate me I shall come and see you."

And so he continues to come once or twice every week—sometimes more; and now and then my sisters let fall significant remarks on the subject of his frequent visits. It is rather odd, they hint, that he should come so often if he has no serious intentions—it is compromising me if he does not mean anything. I am silent, for I would rather cut my tongue out than say he wants me, and I have refused him. Once or twice we have been up at his house lunching and dining. The first time he takes me all through the magnificent rooms and picture galleries, almost if not quite equal to those of Lofton Park; and when I express my delight and wonder, he bends down to me, whispering:

"If you choose they are all yours."

I am so foolish, so ignorant, so unambitious, that I covet none of these things, and they prevail not one whit in inducing me to care for their possessor. In the picture gallery I stop suddenly before a beautiful, melancholy face that seems the very image of Wilfred.

"Oh! who is that?" I ask.

"That's the black sheep of the family," he answers, rather sharply. "You know there's always one in the flock."

"He doesn't look wicked at all," I retort—"it is a splendid face. What did he do?"

"I can't exactly tell you, Miss Doris; and, besides, we ought not to rake up by-gones—particularly of one's own family."

Mr. Carruthers is very good to our boys, lending them guns, and taking them out shooting. I don't know if it is all the spoil of their arms, but we are inundated with game from the Southcote preserves.

One bright morning, early in November, coming in from a walk, I betake me to the store-room, to get out something for dinner, before divesting myself of my walking attire. I shut the door and open the window, as there seems a pervading mustiness, and immediately the sound of Mr. Carruthers' voice strikes on my ear through the open windows of the drawing-room, which are next. Somewhat surprised, I stop to listen, and then papa's voice give utterance to something that sends the blood flying suddenly over my face, neck, arms, making me stand motionless, jar in hand, to listen for more. I ignore the idea of any impropriety in listening—it is of me they are speaking—surely I have a right to hear.

"It is a very delicate matter for me to commence," I hear papa say; "indeed, I hardly know how to broach it. I would not for the world be guilty of the meanness of trying to hook a husband for my daughters. I am quite aware your position is very far above our present one, so I shall think nothing of all which has passed up to this time, but only say that as a man of honor, I hope you won't do anything to excite hopes in my girl that you have no thought of fulfilling. She is but a child, you know; and though one is apt to make light of a child's love——"

Mr. Carruthers' voice interrupts him. I strain my ear to catch his words.

"I should have spoken to you long ago, Mr. Keane," he says; "the dearest wish of my life is to make your youngest daughter my wife; but she does not love me, and will have nothing to do with me."

"I—I don't understand," utters papa, in a perplexed tone.

"I have asked her to marry me a score of times, and she has refused."

"Refused!" (in blank astonishment). And I wait to hear no more, but creep stealthily away to my own room.

Mr. Carruthers leaves the house without my seeing him; and when papa calls me aside after dinner, and I follow him with trembling feet into his office, I guess what is in store for me.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A CHEERFUL TETE-A-TETE.

"Aber die Sehnsucht in meinem Herzen
Ist mit dem Morgen nur starker erwacht;
Ewig verjungen sich meine Schmerzen,
Qualen den Tag, und qualen die Nacht.
Sehnsucht der Liebe schlummert nie,
Sehnsucht der Liebe wacht spat un fruh."

"DORIS," he begins, with some severity, "I heard something this morning that surprised me very much!"—silence unbroken except by the loud ticking of the eight-day clock—"from Mr. Carruthers. I cannot doubt his word, but is it possible that he can have offered you such an honor and you refused it?"

"If I don't love him, papa?" I utter, trembling.

"Pshaw! what folly!" exclaims my father, taking two or three impatient turns up and down the room: "what do you mean?"

"I don't love him, papa," I repeat.

"Are you out of your senses, child?" he cries, stopping short in his walk, and looking impatiently at me. "What in the name of Heaven *do* you want, if you can't love a fine, handsome fellow like that, with the kindest heart in the world, and twenty thousand a year?"

"I don't want anything" (hanging my head), "I am very happy as I am."

"Humbug!" retorts my father, in an exasperated tone. "Heaven knows I am the last man in the world to force a child of mine into marrying a man she couldn't like, but this is beyond all rhyme or reason. "Why" (with rising irritability), "what have you to bring against him?"

"Nothing," I respond hastily.

"A man," pursues papa, "of first-rate position, handsome, rich, and fond of you, what the deuce more d'ye want? Why, none of you, you least of all, could ever have dreamed of such a stroke of fortune happening to you; and you take a crank into your head, forsooth, and begin to fancy you want the moon, or God knows what, if this man doesn't satisfy you."

Papa is getting very angry; I very frightened.

I suppose he sees my terrified look, for he says more mildly:

"If he were unsuitable in age, or frightful to look at, or a bad man, there might be some sense in it; but you, brought up in the country all your life, who've never seen any one fit to hold a candle to him—why, I should have thought you'd have been half out of your senses at the bare idea of such a match. A magnificent place, the best society, horses and carriages, and fine clothes—haven't you *any* of the ambitions of most girls of your age?"

"I should like them all if I loved him," I venture timidly, feeling it almost indelicate to speak of love before my father.

"Love! pshaw!" he says angrily. "You've got your head full of some romantic folly about love. I don't think you know

what you do want. And you're not likely to, if you refuse an opportunity like this—you'll never get such another, I promise you."

We have more words and part. I resolve, in my heart, that I will rather suffer unknown persecutions than marry a man I do not love. And certes I stand in need of all my resolution, for between my mother and sisters (my father never mentions the matter after that once) I have a hard time of it.

For six weeks I am goaded nearly to madness. Even Jack, to whom I flee for sympathy in my distress, is against me.

"I can't make it out, child," he says; "there's no sense in it. You know I've always stood up for you, but hang me if I can in this! I think your head must be turned with so much good fortune. No girl in her senses ever refused such an offer."

"But, Jack," I murmur tearfully, with the old refrain, "if I don't love him?"

"If you don't love him, Doris, my dear, you may depend you never will anybody. Why, Carruthers is such a handsome fellow --such an awfully good sort--I think if I were a woman I should be head over ears in love with him for himself, let alone what he could give me."

"I wish you were a woman, then," I say forlornly.

"Cissy!" cries my brother impatiently, "you are a little fool, and don't know what's good for you. Stop!" and he looks keenly at me, "have you got any one else in your head?"

I crimson and look away.

"So ho!" and he gives a long low whistle. "I've hit the right nail on the head at last. Who's the Adonis that makes you turn up your nose at Carruthers?"

I am silent.

"Come, Cis, out with it."

"Jack," I whisper desperately, "promise me you won't breathe a word to any one."

"Why—what's the mystery! Is it a married man you're in love with?"

"Oh! Jack, but promise me."

"Well, go ahead."

"But do you promise?"

"I suppose so, if you won't tell me without."

"Well"—(a long and agonizing pause)—"I know it's very wrong and very silly——"

"Of course," interposes my brother dryly.

"But," and I am overwhelmed with shame, and hide my face in his arm—"I—I do care for some one—who doesn't care for me, and never will, but I *can't* marry anybody else."

"And who is he?" asks Jack, grimly.

"I can't tell you. Oh! Jack, don't ask me."

"Don't you think," he utters, in a voice that sounds very hard to me, "it's rather small to go on fretting and pining after a man that don't care two straws about you?"

"I know it is," I mutter.

"Then, if I were you I'd try and get over it. You may take

my word for one thing. If you persist in this foolery of refusing Carruthers, there'll come a day when you'll be pretty sorry for it. Why, child, do you know what you're refusing?"

"I ought to," I retort, pettishly. "If I don't, it's not for want of having it dinned into my ears, morning, noon, and night. Southcote Park, powdered footmen, diamonds, horses, and carriages, grand acquaintances, and all that. And what do I care for them!" I cry, passionately. "I've never been used to such grandeur, and I don't want it, and I'd rather die than marry him."

"Cis!" says my brother, calmly, "you are a little fool. And I hope you'll find it out before it's too late."

* * * * * * *

My life becomes a weariness to me, because of the master of Southcote Park. Morning, noon, and night, my sisters entreat and rail at me in quick alternation, until I am rapidly becoming a heroine in my own eyes. Left alone, one might, perhaps, in time forget the old love, and take up with the new; but goaded, urged, tormented, without ceasing, and the beloved gets a halo of "dearness not his due," while the vicariously wooing suitor is loathed to a most unfair and unreasonable degree.

Well, six weeks pass, and I am miserable. Mr. Carruthers still comes to the farm, and his arrival is a signal to every other member of the family to vacate the room and leave us *tete-a-tete.* I feel bitterly indignant at being thrust unwillingly down his throat, and take good care to show him that these lover-like *seances* are not brought about by any will or desire of mine. This is the sort of way in which they go off. I take a piece of work and begin to stitch as if my daily bread depended upon it, never once raising my eyes.

"Awfully cold this morning," he begins, getting up and looking out of the window.

"Is it?"

"Haven't you been out yet?"

"No."

"Won't you come out and take a turn?" (imploringly).

"No, thank you."

"Is that work so very particular?" (approaching the table).

"No—yes—at least not very."

"Won't it wait until I'm gone?"

"If you are going soon;" and then I feel that is a rude speech, and am rather ashamed, so I look up with a faint smile to make the *amende.*

"I hate work," he says, enegetically. "I can't talk to people unless I see their eyes. I believe women only do it to aggravate one. Do leave off."

I put my work down in my lap and look steadfastly at a little speck on the paper by the piano.

"That's no better," he says, in a complaining voice; "you might just as well look at your work—better."

I resume my stitching.

"Miss Doris" (in an injured tone), "I think you are growing rather captious."

"Perhaps you mean stupid," I retort. "I never was left to entertain visitors before. I don't know how to do it."

"I suppose they leave us out of kindness to me," he says, leaning one elbow on the mantel-piece and looking into the fire. "You need not be afraid I shall think my society anything but a penance to you, Miss Keane."

I feel rather sorry.

"Oh, it's not a penance to me at all," I answer, but for the life of me I can't bring any warmth into my voice. Then follows a long pause.

"Puss, poor puss!" and he lifts my pet cat off the rug where he dozes serenely, and sits down to nurse him, thinking thereby perhaps to propitiate me. "Fuz ought to have a silver collar with a bell," he says. "I wish you'd let me get him one."

"I don't think he'd like it."

"Ask him," and he put Fuz into my lap and draws his own chair quite close. My scissors fall on the floor with a click. I pounce upon them that he may not have the pleasure of restoring them to me.

"What are you making?" he asks—"slippers?"

"Yes."

"For your father?"

"No, for Jack."

"I wish you'd make me a pair."

"Why, you wouldn't be seen in them," I say laughing—"there's nothing so hideous or unbecoming."

"I'll risk that. Will you make me some?"

"No, certainly not."

"Why won't you?"

"Because that's the first thing girls always do when they're engaged to a man," I answer rather viciously.

"Do they? Ah, then" (with some bitterness) "of course it's quite out of the question."

He gets up, looks out of the window again, and comes back. "Well, I'm only boring you—I suppose I'd better go."

I utter a polite disclaimer.

He stands over me with his eyes devouring my face, but I keep mine fixed on my work.

"Won't you look at me?" he says plaintively at last.

"Oh, certainly," and I open my eyelids wide, and look at him with a gaze as expressive as that of a doll with a wire in its side.

"Who would think a tender little thing like you could be so hard?" he utters, almost as if he were speaking to himself.

I make an impatient gesture.

"I'm a great fool to come worrying you so often," he says, turning away and looking attentively at something on the table. "I only make you hate me worse. Every time I come I make up my mind it shall be the last, and yet I'm such an idiot I can't keep away. Child" (turning suddenly upon me), "is there something so very repulsive about me that you can't possibly like me?"

I fling the work down in my lap and look up with petulant anger.

"Did I say you were repulsive? I think you everything that is fascinating and delightful—or I ought to, for your perfections are dinned into my ears fifty times in the day."

"Who by?"

'Oh, everybody—mamma, my sisters." A sudden inspiration dawns upon me. "Why don't you fall in love with one of them?" I say. "They're much better looking than me, and I'm sure they would have you even if you were ever so repulsive."

A red flush crosses his face, and he looks at me half wrathfully.

"It's very strange how cruel the most tender-hearted woman can be to a man who has the misfortune to love her. Even a child like you, who wouldn't hurt a fly, can say the bitterest, most galling things to me. To think"—coming ominously near, angry, yet half laughing—"to think I could take you up and crush all your little tender bones, and you dare to sit and lash me with bitter words, as if you weren't the least bit afraid of me!"

I make a sudden move backward, upsetting Fuz out of my lap.

"It's your own fault," I cry desperately, "what *am* I to do? If you'd only leave me alone I should like you very much; but you won't, and that drives me to say unkind things. You talk of wanting me to marry you, as if it was nothing at all. Why, I shouldn't like to marry any one I was very fond of—at least not yet awhile; but I'd rather die than marry some one I did not love."

And, desperately hot and red, I jump up, push my hair back from my face, and rush to the piano, to give vent to my feelings in a loud and lively tune.

"Good-bye," he says approaching me, very stiff in the back and wrathful about the eyes.

I nod my head, still going on with the galop at a mad rate.

"Won't you shake hands?" (coldly but with a softened voice).

"Oh! certainly." And I extend my hand.

"You look very glad to get rid of me."

"Do I?" (indifferently). "I didn't mean to."

"Shall I come and take you to drive to-morrow?"

"Thank you. But I don't know if——"

"Are you so full of engagements?" (huffily).

"No; but——"

"Well, at all events, I'll drive around at three. You can do as you like about coming. Good-bye."

"Good-bye;" and as the door closes I give a sigh of relief, and break with renewed fury into my galop.

Mamma comes in, looking very angry.

"Doris, I am surprised at you. You are an ill-bred girl, playing like that before Mr. Carruthers is out of the house, as if you were delighted to get rid of him."

I color and feel ashamed of myself. I hate to do anything rude; and after all he is very good to me.

---

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A TEST.

"Nay, listen unto me.
I will speak frankly. I have never loved thee—
I cannot love thee. This is not my fault,
It is my destiny. Seek another wife,
Better than I and fairer.
Thou art unhappy in this hopeless passion.
I never sought thy love; never did aught
To make thee love me.
Take this farewell—depart in peace."

ONE day when the enforced *tete-a-tete* is going one, I take a sudden resolution. There has been a long pause, and I exclaim suddenly, trembling like a leaf, and with a nervous beating in my throat and chest.

"Mr. Carruthers, do you *really* care for me?"

He looks at me surprised.

"I must have expressed myself very badly all this time, if you are still in doubt on the subject."

"Would you" (clasping my hands painfully together)—"would you do a very great thing for me if I asked you?"

"Anything in the world that man can do, except give you up."

Silence falls upon us; a sense of impotent anger fills my breast.

"Why do you want to torture me?" I cry at last fiercely, feeling I could say anything to wound him. "You know I am only one poor helpless creature that everybody is against, and you take a mean advantage of me. I was happy before I knew you—now I am wretched."

He looks at me for a moment. I can read in his eyes how bitterly my words have gone home. Then he says slowly:

"I think I understand you at last. I shall never trouble you any more."

I feel a little frightened, dreading the wrath which awaits me from my family. I fall on my knees at his feet, with a childish idea that this form of humiliation is most calculated to mollify him, and he does not attempt to raise me.

"Indeed I don't want to offend you or to be unkind," I falter, "but I *feel* I shall never love you. If you would only seem as if you gave me up, and leave off coming, I should be grateful to you all my life;" and I look up imploringly in his face.

"I will do as you say," he answers, in a choked uncertain voice, raising me in his arms and holding me fast. "Will you bid me good-bye?"

I know what he means, and an awful sensation comes across me, as if I were just sitting down in the dentist's chair. He draws me to him, and I clinch my hands and hold my breath, as one does to prevent crying out. Any satisfaction that a man can obtain from embracing a woman who feels like that I trust he enjoys.

The salutation over, I look up and catch Harry's eye with a mocking smile passing the window. Fortunately Mr. Carruthers goes at once, before I have time to vent my wrath and shame in bitter words. I feel I shall go out of my senses if Harry divulges what he has seen, and race out after him.

"Harry," I say, dragging him into the storeroom and shutting the door, "promise me faithfully you won't tell a soul."

He eyes me with something between malice and disdain.

"Oh, what jolly humbugs you girls are!" he utters, witheringly. "There, you pretend you don't care for the fellow, and I'm sure he couldn't have been hugging you up closer if you doted on him ever so."

"You don't understand," I say, hot to the ears with shame at his plain speaking. "I couldn't help it."

"Oh! my eye, couldn't you?" he retorts, derisively; and for the first time in my life I come to the conclusion that my youngest brother *is* a rude, vulgar boy. "I thought women always scratched and fought when they didn't want a fellow to kiss them—not stand like a log, as if they liked it."

My fingers long to box his ears.

"I tell you, I couldn't refuse, Harry," I exclaim, angrily.

"You're a little humbug, miss, that's what you are," retorts my brother; "and you're not a bit better than the others. I remember catching that Ju in the lanes, kissing Gus Larkin like anything; and I made a sudden hoot behind the hedge, and wasn't she just frightened? I cut away, and she never knew it was me; but I just spoiled her evening, and served her right too."

"Harry" (I try coaxing now), "won't you believe me?"

"No, I won't."

"I tell you, I'm never going to see Mr. Carruthers again."

"Walker!" and Harry emphasizes his vulgarity with a most expressive wink. "Not till the next time, I suppose. No, Cis, you don't chouse me like that."

"Very well," I cry, impatient; "think what you like, but promise me not to tell."

"Oh! I dare say," he answers, with another wink. "What'll you give me not to split?"

I look round for a bribe—the spot is convenient.

"I'll give you a pot of apricot jam."

"It isn't yours to give."

"Yes, it is. Jack gave me the apricots, and I made it myself."

"Then it's sure to be beastly."

"Very well—look," and I tear the paper off and disclose the tempting contents.

"Oh!" says Harry, "but that isn't enough—I must have something more."

"I'm going into Colton this afternoon, and I'll buy you a shilling's worth of orange-drops."

"All right, then, I promise."

"But how am I to know, when you've eaten the jam and the drops, that you won't go and tell after all?"

Harry is not at all offended at the dishonorable suggestion. "*Crook my finger never come straight!*" he says, that being considered a binding oath amongst his school-fellows; and I go to my room, and he consumes the jam standing, and eats his dinner twenty minutes afterward, with no diminution of his wonted robust appetite.

Mr. Carruthers keeps his promise, and comes no more to the farm. Every one is amazed, and I am questioned and cross-questioned, but nothing is elicited from me as to the real cause of his prolonged absence. However, I have a hard time of it, and it would not be the truth if I said I do not miss him. Now it is too late, I remember that it was pleasant to have the attentions of a man whom every one considered a great personage; and that a drive on the box-seat of a well-appointed four-in-hand three times a week was a very agreeable interlude to the monotony of life at Halling Farm.

As the dull weeks go on, and I never see or hear a word of him or Wilfred, I begin to feel as if I have been rather foolish and obstinate, and might have liked him if I had tried. And my family, who certainly treated me with some consideration while there was a chance of my becoming mistress of Southcote Park, snub me, and show their contempt and displeasure so unceasingly that my life becomes a real burden. The bitterness of my sisters is more than I can bear, for their drives and meetings with the officers are put a stop to, and I believe they look upon me as if I had done it only to spite them. Now it is too late, I see my folly. Of course I shall never have the chance of seeing such another man as Mr. Carruthers; shall remain all my life a miserable old maid, unloving, unloved, with nothing but a memory to live on. Surely if I *am* to be unhappy, better to be so as Mrs. Carruthers of Southcote, surrounded by all the *apanages* of wealth, dearly loved by my husband, than poor, insignificant, despised, uncared-for Doris Keane.

One evening in the early spring, we go to a performance at the Colton theater. A company has come over from a large town some distance off, and every night for a fortnight they are to give a pantomime, which has had great local success. For some time previous to their arrival, flaming placards have been distributed everywhere about Colton and the neighborhood, with impossible pictures of impossible feats, as performed by Messrs. Clown, Pantaloon & Co.

Harry comes home from time to time with wonderful accounts of the coming troupe, and will not be pacified until papa has promised to take him. My sisters do not care about pantomimes, but I am glad of any change from my present weary life, and when papa offers to take me I assent gladly. Fred is home for a week, so we go a party of four, quite prepared to spend a merry evening. Harry is so afraid of missing any part of the performance, that we arrive before the musicians are seated. However, we are amused by seeing the people come in. There are no stalls or private boxes, but all the better part of the company sit in the boxes or dress-circle.

The performance commences with the pantomime; we are

highly amused and excited (we three younger ones at least). Presently there is a great rustle as of a large party entering, and I look round, a little impatient of the interruption.

A large space has been kept in the center of the house, near us, but to the left of us, and I see the intended occupants take their places, Lady Cecil, Lady Flora, Lady Mabel Lyon, and Lady de Vyne, then Mr. Carruthers, Lord Levinge, Captain Carlyle, and Mr. Gerald Wynne.

My attention is quite distracted from the stage now—the grotesque drolleries, the favorite airs, the exciting waltz music, have no more charm for me; happily I am sitting next the partition, a little in the dark, and can watch the new-comers without being much observed. I dare say it is very small, but I cannot help thinking with some mortification that but for my own foolishness I might be amongst these great folk, whom every one is regarding with respectful curiosity and interest. I have known them all, and now I don't suppose they see me, or would notice me if they did. Mr. Carruthers has to pass papa, and shakes him very cordially by the hand; to me he gives a little distant bow. Why should I feel mortified and color with vexation?—why should I long for him to come up and talk to me?—why would I give anything to have him sitting beside me and paying me the marked attentions of yore? Is it not by my own entreaty that he shuns me?—have I not importuned him to be indifferent and to leave me? Yes, that is true, and I am not in love with him now; but my life has been so dull and bitter, that I long for his kindness, for being made much of by such a man as he.

It is part vanity, perhaps, part jealousy. A woman may give a man up, may be glad to be free of his attentions, but she can never, unless she absolutely dislikes him, be glad to see them given to another when she is alone and unnoticed.

Mr. Carruthers is sitting by Lady Mabel, talking and seeming pleased to listen to her. She is small and fair—quite young and very merry; he used to say she reminded him of me. Lady Cecil is entirely occupied with Lord Levinge—he leans over her, and they converse the whole time in whispers, without paying the slighest attention to the performance. It is nearly over, when the door opens again, and looking up, I see Wilfred Carruthers enter. Never since the day of our cruel parting in the woods have I set my eyes on him—my heart seems to stand still, the painful color rushes to my face and neck, I hold my breath. His brother is forgotten—I have no thought of any one but him; and I crouch nearer to the dark partition to watch him. There is a gloomy look on his brow, that deepens into a scowl as he stands for a moment to look at Lord Levinge and Lady Cecil, before coming forward. He greets the rest of the party; she is not aware of his presence until he leans down to her. Then she turns her head carelessly, holds back two fingers over her shoulder to him, speaks an indifferent word, and turns again to Lord Levinge. A wrathful, miserable look comes into Wilfred's eyes as he takes a seat behind the others. I can see a forced smile curl his lips, and a false glitter brighten his deep

blue eyes as he bends to speak to Lady Flora Lyon. Am I glad because of his discomfiture?—does a throb of pleasurable revenge quicken the pulses of my heart that he should suffer as he had made me suffer? Oh! no, no!—a thousand times no! I feel an infinitely greater tenderness springing up for him than I have ever known before. I crouch nearer against the wall—not for the world would I have him know I am a witness of his mortification; but I hate her!—oh! I hate her from the bottom of my soul for making him suffer!

The play is over—every one makes for the door. As we descend the stone steps, I see Lord Levinge putting Lady Cecil into her carriage. She leans out, giving him her ungloved hand, that sparkles with diamonds, smiles in his eyes, whispers a word which he bends eagerly forward to catch. Wilfred is beside me—there is a glance of mingled fury and misery in his eyes. He does not see the poor little girl beside him, impotent to help, yet who would gladly take all his suffering into her heart to save him from it.

---

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE GLAD SPRINGTIDE.

"When daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight."

For a week after this I am so miserable I scarcely know how to bear my life. The old longing to see him, only to see him, comes back with tenfold force. "Just to see him—to speak to him once," I murmur through my close-pressed lips, clasping my hands painfully, and straining my eyes out of my little window, as though they could pierce the woods, nay, the very walls of the house that holds him.

How sorely I repent having broken off communication with his brother; then at least I might have heard of him sometimes.

One morning Hepzibah brings me a letter to my room. It is very rarely that the post-bag contains anything for me, and I extend an eager hand to take it. A sudden color flushes my cheeks, a great trembling palsies my fingers as I read the superscription, written in a strange hand. Hepzibah is gone again, but for a moment my excitement is too great to permit of my opening the letter. How foolish I am! as if it could by any possible chance be from *him!*—what should he have to write to me about?—has he not forgotten my very existence? Besides, it is a little cramped hand, and the envelope is plain—no crest, no monogram, as I think fashionable people use. Carefully I open it. There is but a line and a half of writing inside:

"*Meet me in the old place at four to-morrow.*"

And underneath a little hieroglyph, that I make out to be *W. G. C.*—Wilfred Granville Carruthers that stands for.

I fling myself down on the pillows. I toss my arms above my head, and such a rapture comes into my heart as I have never in

my lifetime known before. He comes to me, then, now she has disappointed him. The thought might have been bitter to some women, but not to me who love him. *Meet me to-morrow*, that meant to-day, of course, since it must have been written yesterday. Eight hours, and I shall see him—shall hear his voice! He must perforce be good to me, since he has bidden me meet him. I seem to tread on air all the morning; my old blitheness comes back to me, and the miserable gloom and despondency that has hung upon me lately falls off like a mantle. "Winter is gone, summer is here," sing I in my heart, and full of jubilance I chirp about the house like a cheerful robin.

Long before the cathedral clock chimes four I am in the woods, waiting beside the old oak and peering into the distance for the first glimpse of my well-beloved. He does not keep me long; and when I catch sight of him striding toward me, I cannot resist the impulse to go forward and meet him. Handsomer than ever he looks in his velvet shooting-coat, with the gray sombrero drawn down over his eyes.

He puts out both hands to me, and I give mine with a glad beating heart.

"It is very good of you to come," he murmurs, in a voice so tender that it makes my cup of happiness brim over. "I thought you would."

Then we walk together in silence until we come to the big oak.

"It is quite warm, and the grass is dry," he says. "Won't you sit down in the old place? I want to talk to you, and one can't talk standing or walking about."

I obey, and he flings himself down beside me.

"And so, child," he commences, "since I saw you last you have done a very foolish thing."

I blush and am silent.

"Is it true?" he asks, leaning toward me, and looking steadfastly into my eyes.

"Is what true?" I say, turning my head away.

"That you have refused to be mistress of these woods and Southcote Park, and all other fair and desirable things over which my brother is master."

"Who told you so?"

"Himself."

There is a long pause.

"Oh! you foolish little child," whispers the soft voice presently, "have you so little notion of the value of the good things of this world that you can lightly scorn all a man like Vivian can offer you?"

"Would you have had me take him for what he has without loving him?" I ask indignantly.

"But he is good-looking—there is nothing repulsive about him—most women tell me he is *charming*."

And Wilfred emphasizes the word with a scarcely perceptible sneer.

"He is very kind and good," I say.

"But that is not enough? Kind, good, handsome, rich?

and the child is not content? Surely it is pining for the moon."

"Don't laugh at me," I say imploringly.

"Have you so many lovers, and are they so desirable," he continues in the same tone, "that you toss to the wind your chance of a man that all the young ladies in the country are crazy to marry?"

"No," I say, stung to the quick, and looking steadfastly in his face. "I know quite well all I can ever expect. I am an insignificant country girl—I have no lovers—I never expect any. Your brother did me a great honor in wishing to raise me, and I shall always be grateful to him for it. I shall be a neglected old maid to the end of my days, and I don't suppose any man will ever notice me again."

With a hurried, passionate breathlessness I cry out my sharp jerked sentences.

"What an appalling picture!" utters Wilfred. "And you can choose such a fate rather than marry a man who would heap every pleasure and luxury in life around you? Poor Vivian! how you must hate him!"

"I do not," I cry indignantly. "I like him very, very much."

"Then you must love some one else very dearly, or you would never hesitate because your feelings only lacked a little of the fire that you seem to think it necessary to bestow upon a man you mean to marry."

His voice is ever so soft and carressing, but his words make my face burn with sudden shame.

"Is it so?" he whispers.

"Why do you ask me?" I cry fiercely. "Yes, it is. I am a poor fool, only fit to be laughed at. I am like the ignorant savages, I give my pure gold for a bit of colored glass. I love, and I know my love is not valued, but despised, unasked for. You need not think" (working myself to eminent passion) "that because I am foolish in one way I am in all. It is not because I cannot help giving my love that I do not know I am pouring it out like water on sand, all to waste. I don't deceive myself—you need not be afraid."

My words are gasped out, I cannot restrain them, bitterly ashamed though I feel at having betrayed myself."

"Child!" he whispers, drawing quite near, and looking with a tender light in his blue eyes, "give me that love—it shall not be wasted. I swear to prize it as the purest, most precious gift this world can give me."

Am I dreaming?—does some strange mirage float across my dazzled senses?—Wilfred Carruthers asking for my love! A sudden mist blinds me—my breath comes quicker—I feel his kisses on my face, his arms round me, and I am there motionless, as one paralyzed with sudden joy.

"Tell me, darling, is it I whom you love?"

Surely I need not be ashamed to confess it now.

"I want all your love, my little one," he whispers, with a tenderness I scarcely comprehend as coming from him. "My heart has ached after it a thousand times since I last saw your

small white face; your wistful eyes have haunted me in the night many a time when I have been wretched and miserable."

"Miserable?"

"Yes, awfully miserable. Look at me—don't I look a century older since we were here together last?"

"What made you so?" I ask quickly, without thinking. "Was it Lady Cecil?"

"Lady Cecil!" he repeats scornfully, a deep red flush crossing his face; "what makes you think of her?"

I am silent, sorry to have betrayed my thought.

"Have you heard rumors even in your part? Do the gaping clodhoppers concern themselves in my affairs?" he says, with sharp impatience.

"Oh! no, I have heard nothing," I reply, quickly—"it was my fancy."

"You thought I loved a doll like that!" (scornfully)—"a thing that's not woman at all, but only a pretty peg to hang fine clothes upon. *Grand merci!* I leave such loves as those to fellows like Levinge, who having no mind or soul themselves, don't look for it in others."

That speech grates a little upon me.

"Don't speak of her, child," he continues, impatiently; "tell me over and over again you love me, that you don't care for anything else in the world but me, that it was really and truthfully for me you gave up my brother and all grand prospects in this world. Was it for me, little one?" he whispers, in his low, passionate voice—"for *my* sake that you were content to be a poor neglected old maid all your life, when you might have eclipsed Lady Cecil?"

And I falter "Yes."

"You dear thing!" he whispers, caressingly. "I wish I was more worthy of you." And a sad, troubled look comes into his blue eyes, as if he meant it in real earnest.

I laugh—it seems too absurd. More worthy of me, this hero of heroes—a little simple, ignorant girl like me.

"Come," he says, presently, "tell me what you have been doing all this long time since I saw you."

"I have been conjugating the verb *s'ennuyer*," I answer, smiling, and a little shy of my French; but it used to be a favorite saying of his.

"In spite of Vivian and all the picnics he used to take you, and the drives on his coach?"

"Yes; but it was duller still when he left off coming."

"Ah!" exclaims Wilfred jealously; "then you were not quite indifferent to him, after all?"

"I will tell you just how I felt," I say with hasty frankness. "When he used to come I thought I would give anything for him only to stay away. I used to fancy myself a martyr, because every one wanted me to marry him, and I got quite vexed and angry when he asked me to try and like him. But you know (apologetically) our life is so very, very dull, that when he was really gone I could not help missing him and the pleasant parties he used to make for us."

"You repented, then, and would have had him back but for your pride's sake?" asks Wilfred bitterly. "I do not think it is too late yet, though people give him credit for wanting Lady Mabel Lyon—it used to be her sister."

"You know it is not so," I cry eagerly; "you know I do not repent—you know——"

"What?" (more softly.)

"I have told you," I mutter piteously; "why do you want to make me say it any more?"

"Because I cannot hear it half often enough, my sweet; I would have you put your dear arms round me and say over and over again the same words only—'Wilfred, I love you.'"

"But you know it."

"It matters not—I cannot be satisfied unless I see your lips frame and hear your voice utter it. Come, my child, let me hear it once."

He *is* my master—every fiber of my heart acknowledges his lordship over me, and I obey him like a faithful spaniel, looking up the while with mute entreaty for his approval.

"Wilfred, I love you."

"That's my own sweet love. You will come again to-morrow?"

Ay, that will I, all the to-morrows of my life, when that dear voice bids me. How supreme is the happiness that fills my heart as I go homeward! It is just one occasional glimpse of paradise like this makes one reconciled to all the long weary painful hours and days that intervene. We have the memory of a sweet glad time, and what can rob us of the hope that once more in our lives it may come back to us.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### AT BAY.

"I would not have her
Break her heart for a man who has none to break,
Or wither on her stalk like some pale rose
Deserted by the bird she thought a nightingale,
According to the Orient tale."

DAY after day we meet in the Southcote Woods—Wilfred and I. A great change has come over my life. To the passionate misery of last autumn, to the dull weariness of the winter, has succeeded a fair springtime, in which all my hopes bud out—a time of happiness which I look back on as some sweet dream from which one would fain never have awakened. Sometimes my heart smites me that I am not acting rightly in holding these stolen meetings—I feel I am living a life of deceit—once even I ventured to hint as much to him.

He turns suddenly upon me.

"Can you bear to give me up, then? Do you value me less than the opinion of your family?"

"No, no," I cry eagerly, "but I feel it is almost wicked to live acting a double part; it keeps me awake at night sometimes, I think of it always when I kneel down to say my prayers."

"Ah! child," he utters remorsefully, "would to God I could

kneel down and say my prayers with a pure heart and conscience like yours!"

"But they are not pure," I cry; "in my own way, I am quite as wicked as—as you—it's no merit not to do things that you've never been tempted to do. And after all, you're not very, very wicked, are you?"

I ask the question with eager eyes, with my heart in my voice. I long so to think that my idol is worthy to be set up and worshiped.

He laughs, a hard, low, bitter laugh.

"I never murdered any one, or stole anything. I'm afraid I've broken all the other commandments pretty freely. Yes, I suppose I am very wicked—you'd best not have much to do with me."

I sit watching him and feeling very miserable.

"Go away and leave me," he says, harshly. "I shall contaminate you. Go to your family and tell them that a sinner loved you dearly, and you went away and left him oppressed by the thought of his wickedness; and they will receive you like the lamb that was or might have been lost, more especially when they find the sinner has no gold to gild over his blackness."

I am stupefied by this sudden outburst, which I feel I have not deserved or called for by any word of mine—and lately he has been so kind and tender, that I have almost forgotten to be afraid of him.

"You are unjust and cruel," I say, feeling hurt and indignant when I have time to recover from my surprise.

"So I am," he says, passionately, with a sudden change of mood. "Oh! little one, you have been so dear to me, that I can't bear the thought of life without you—I ought to give you up and go away, but I *can't*."

And suddenly he puts his head on my shoulder, and sobs like a woman.

I am in an agony—the idea of a man crying is to me the most terrible thing in the world. I am at my wit's end to know what to do; all I can mutter is:

"Oh, Wilfred! Wilfred, dear Wilfred!—pray—pray don't!"

It is the first time I have ever called him by his name.

After that scene I do not see him again for a month; but he writes me a line, saying:

"*Forget me. I leave you for your own sake.*"

Well, I will spare the reader a recital of my anguish of mind—my alternate misery, anger, bitterness, despair.

"Good times and bad times, and all times pass over," as Kingsley truly says; and a forgotten sorrow is all the better for being left with the grass green upon its grave.

A month almost to the day, and there comes another letter in the small cramped hand—"*Meet me to-morrow.*" This time I do not acquiesce at once, glad and joyful; there is indignation in my heart—he has used me cruelly. Am I to be like clay in his hands, to be turned and molded to his every caprice? I say to myself, "Better to keep away. I shall only make a new

scourge for myself." But, after all, I go, for he is the one object in life that I care to live for.

It is nearly summer now; the corn is growing up fair and green, the leaves are thick upon the trees, bright with every shade of verdure, and my wild flowers are blossoming again. I will not be the first this time. It is nearly five o'clock before I reach our old trysting-place, and far off already I see the tall, lithe form moving restlessly to and fro. Catching sight of me, he comes eagerly forward.

"I have tried very hard—I *could* not keep away any longer," he says in a low voice.

I cannot forbear reproaching him for his cruelty.

"Why, child," he answers, looking at me, "you should not reproach me, of all people. It was for your sake I tried to keep away. Do you think that the poor little weak regret you felt after me was to be named in the same year with the anguish of longing I had for you? I have done all I knew," he continues, passionately, "to get you out of my head. I have tried to drown you in a perpetual whirl of excitement—in society, in revelry, in dissipation; and everywhere I went your little white face came and looked in upon me, and haunted me with wistful eyes, until I nearly went mad and blew my brains out, only to get rid of you. You had your revenge for my coldness last year, but I didn't care for you then, and now—now," he says, looking at me with eyes that almost terrify me, "I would sell my soul——"

"Oh! hush! hush!" I cry, in agony, putting my hand before his mouth, and half turning my head, in horror of seeing some awful witness to his blasphemy.

There *is* a witness—not near enough to hear, but who sees and stands motionless a moment, while my hand is still on Wilfred's mouth, and his arm about me. The blood rushes crimson to my face, terror palsies my limbs, and I sink down on the ground with a groan.

"What ails you, child?" cries Wilfred.

"Oh! what shall I do?—what shall I do?" I gasp; and he follows the direction of my eyes.

"Who is it?"

"Jack—my brother."

Wilfred says nothing, but looks dreamily at me and bites his lips.

"Well?" after a pause; and I answer:

"He will never let me come any more."

"Won't he, by——!" (with sudden passion). "And will you give me up tamely if he tells you to?"

"No," I say; "never. But I *must* go now."

"When am I to see you again? You must manage it somehow, child, unless you want me to blow my brains out."

He looks so fierce that I am half afraid of him.

"I shall come here every day until I see you; and if they prevent you—you must write—do you hear?"

"Yes," I answer, trembling. I am thinking of the interview with Jack that is in store for me.

"Do you swear it?"

"Ye—es."

"Swear before we part that you will not give me up."

"I will never give you up."

"Swear!"

"I swear."

"Good-bye, my darling," and he holds me a moment so fast I cannot breathe. Then with reluctant steps I wend me through the moss and fern down to the gate. Jack will be waiting for me, I know. Yes, there he is, with an angry frown on his brow, leaning against the stile, and looking as I have never in my life seen him look before. He does not speak at first, but watches my shifting color sternly.

"Jack!" I say timidly, frightened at his silence.

"Well!"

"Why don't you speak to me?"

"I have nothing to say. I am going to listen; it is for you to speak."

"Jack!" I put my hand on his arm; he shakes it off. "What have I done? why are you angry."

"Who is that man?" he says, sternly.

"Wil—Mr. Wilfred Carruthers."

"And pray how long have you been on such intimate terms with him?" he asks, in a harsh voice—oh! so unlike his own.

I am silent.

"How often have you met him in this place? Once? twice? six times? twelve? twenty times?"

"I have not seen him a long time until to-day," I falter.

"When did you first meet him here?"

Oh, I don't think any criminal ever went through such mortal terror before his judge as I do before Jack this moment.

"Last summer."

"What! after you met him at Whitehouse?"

"Before."

My brother, who has always loved me so dearly, looks at me with abhorrence.

"When was the first time?" His tone is harsher and colder than ever.

"Oh, Jack!" I cry, "don't look at me like that. I have not done anything wrong."

"Has he asked you to marry him?"

"No;" that answer makes my crowning torture.

"And you have met him here often?"

"Not—not very."

"A dozen times?"

I hang my head.

"Day after day, perhaps? Look here!" he cries, with sudden passion, "you have always been my favorite sister. I believed you a pure, little, innocent, good girl, who would have died rather than deceived me or your father and mother; and here to-day I find you—good God! I don't know——" (his voice dies away). "What! you have done nothing wrong, and I find you in the arms of a man who has the reputation of being the worst friend a pure woman can have—in his arms, and you confess he

has never spoken of marriage to you! By Heaven! he shall marry you; or I will horsewhip him through Colton, and he shall never set eyes on you again until the day of his death or mine. I will go after him now, this very moment, and make him swear to marry you, or——"

Jack is white with passion. There is a tradition that the devil is very strong in the Keane blood when it is once roused; I can believe it. A sudden fury fills me. I no longer fear him or any one else, and I seize him by the arm like a tigeress.

"That you shall not, I swear!" I cry. "You shall never make me so low as to force me on a man who has not asked for me. If you breathe a word to him, if you lay a finger on him, I will go after him, I care not where, and not one of you shall ever set eyes on me again."

"I'll take good care of that," he answers, furiously.

"You think," I say quite coolly, for my passion is too intense for violence—"you think I am a weak timid girl, to be overawed and frightened and blustered at; but you don't know me. I love that man with all my heart. I don't care a bit for my life without him, and if you *dare* to speak to him—if you *dare* to force me upon him—if you *dare* to try and part us, I swear I will leave home, though you lock me up for a year, and go after him, if it is to the world's end."

Jack looks at me stupefied. My passion masters his; but then all my life is bound up in this thing that is comparatively a small matter to him.

"Doris," he says, presently, "are you mad?"

"No," I answer, "I am not mad, unless you drive me to it."

And I feel how strange are the eyes with which I am looking at the brother whom I used to love better than any one else in the world.

"You will come home with me to my father!" he says, sternly, laying his grasp on my arm.

In an instant I have torn myself free, with a strange new strength.

"I will not!" I retort, with fierce defiance. "Either you swear now and here not to betray me, or I will never return home again."

"What do you mean to do?" he asks, quietly; "are you ready to starve or go to the workhouse?"

"I am ready to do anything in the world but to give him up."

Jack looks at me. I think he is a little frightened by my determination.

"Cissy!" he begins in a kinder voice, "what has come to you? I hardly think it is you at all. The little sister that I loved, turned into a bold woman, who meets strange men secretly, without the knowledge of her family, and defies me like a fury, when I am only anxious for her honor and safety!"

I am a little subdued.

"If you had spoken kindly to me at first," I say, "I would

have told you all. I have done no wrong—I am not bold—you have no right to say so."

"What can I think," he asks bitterly, "when I see you in the arms of a man who you confess has never asked you to be his wife? If it had been Fan or Ju or Anna I might have felt as angry, but it would not have gone to my heart as it does with you, that I always thought the purest, innocentest little flower God ever put breath into.

"Jack," I entreat, "listen to me, and I will tell you all."

And with my hands clinging to his arm, while he looks sternly away in the distance, I tell him of my meetings with Wilfred from first to last. He listens in silence—his brow now and then deepening into a frown, or flushing a sudden red; and when I have finished he pauses a long time before answering.

"Perhaps I was a little hard on you," he says presently; "you may have done wrong out of ignorance, but I can't forgive you for practicing the deceit you've done. Why didn't you say honestly, when they wanted you to marry Carruthers, that you loved this man?"

"What!" I cry, with burning cheeks, "say I was breaking my heart about a man who cared nothing for me?"

"Look you here, Cis!" says Jack, "the man you refused is an honorable gentleman, and this fellow's no better than a scamp. Hold your tongue until I've finished. Vivian Carruthers comes straight, as soon as he cares for you, and asks to marry you. Did he meet you sneaking in the woods?—did he kiss and fondle you over, and pretend to love you, and all the time never breathe anything of wanting you honorably? And for a whole year what has this other fellow been doing? Trying to deceive—don't interrupt me, child, you don't understand these things—trying to cozen and deceive an innocent young girl, only too easy a prey for a blackguard like him. Why, you poor little ignorant simpleton, you don't know what men are—God forbid you should! Don't you believe I have your interest at heart? Don't you believe I care more for you than this fellow, who, by your own confession, has played fast and loose with you ever since you knew him? Why, child, I could tell you fifty stories about the man, only I wouldn't sully your innocent ears."

"You may say what you like," I break out fiercely. "I don't believe a word of it, and if it was all true, I" (with a great gasp)—"I should only love him the better."

"Very well," retorts Jack, angrily. "Then I wash my hands of you. But I shall see to it, for the honor of the family that some steps are taken to prevent you making a fool of yourself, or bringing disgrace upon us."

"You wrong us both," I exclaim, proudly; "he has never breathed a word to me that papa and mamma, and all of you might not have heard. Why can't we love each other, even if neither of us wants to marry."

Jack looks pityingly at me.

"You poor romantic little goose!" he says, in a tone that irritates me by its intense superiority; "do you think that a

*roue* of five-and-thirty feels the same as you do—do you think —there! there"—he breaks off impetuously—"it's no use our discussing it—you don't understand me. But once for all, Cis, you must either give him up, or let me speak to him."

"I will do neither," I cry, waxing fierce again.

"If I say nothing at home, will you give me your word not to see him for a week?"

I hesitate; but the bribe of his silence is so tempting, I dare not refuse it altogether.

"What do you mean to do in a week?" I ask, suspiciously.

"Never mind. Do you promise?"

"On one condition."

"Well?"

"That you neither speak nor write to him about me."

It is Jack's turn to hesitate.

"Very well," he answers at last, with a gulp, "I promise."

"Then I do too."

"We'd better be going home," he says; and turning, we wend our way silently homeward.

In the middle of the first field I stop.

"Jack," I say, plaintively, "give me a kiss, and be friends."

"No," he answers curtly; "don't ask me. I have loved you better than all the rest of them put together, Cis, and you've deceived me. You'll never be the same to me again—never."

---

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE GYPSY AGAIN.

"Les femmes ne peuvent repondre de ce qu'elles feront, parce qu'elles n'en savent rien elles-memes. De tres bonne foi elles disent: 'Je ferai cela.' Et dans le moment elles le feraient; mais le moment passe, c'est autre chose."

TO-DAY is the first of July, and on the twentieth, my birthday, I am to be married to Wilfred Carruthers. I hardly know how everything has come about—there seems a haze over my brain. I only know that I am supremely, unutterably happy. It is just a little painful to me to write down what happened between the time that Jack knew of my love for Wilfred and to-day, that I am his promised wife. I feel it might seem as if I had been forced upon him, because, for modesty's sake, I dare not say how much I belive he loves me.

For a week I was in a state of terrible uncertainty about what Jack meant to do; something painful and miserable I felt sure was coming, though I scarcely knew what to dread.

A passionate letter arrived from Wilfred, urging me to meet him; but I dared not break my promise to Jack. Days of silence and suspense follow, and then one afternoon, as I am sitting by my window, I hear a crunching of the gravel underneath, and looking down, see Wilfred coming up the path to the front door. A sudden heat and faintness seize me, a terror that some dreadful consequence will ensue from this rashness. We shall be parted forever. I almost hold my breath as he rings the bell and asks for Miss Doris Keane. Hastily I smooth my hair, and tie a

knot of blue ribbon into it, for, frightened as I am, the feminine desire to be pleasing in the eyes of my beloved still clings to me. As good fortune will have it, there is no one at home but me. My sisters are in Colton; mamma has gone to visit a sick woman; Hepzibah comes to my room with a grim and sullen visage.

"There's a gentleman down-stairs, miss, as asked for you. I was a good mind not to let him in with your pa an' ma out; but in he walks, as if he was master, for all I looked as if he had no business here."

"It's all right," I say, hurriedly, feeling very much ashamed at my grand and haughty lover being received so cavalierly by our sour-faced domestic.

"I don't know about its being all right," she responds, tartly.

But I brush past her, and in a moment my trembling fingers are on the lock of the drawing-room door, and my heart beats so that I am nearly choked.

"My darling!"

And there are no more words between us for a long time. When I can look at him, I see there is a hunted, wild look in his eyes, as though he has suffered.

"Have you been ill?" I ask, anxiously.

"Put your hand here, child!" he raises it to his temples, which are throbbing and beating painfully. "I have been nearly mad since I saw you."

The tears spring up in my eyes.

"And you?" he asks, "have you suffered? I don't think women feel very much."

A weary remembrance comes over me of all that I have endured for his sake. It oppresses me so that I feel it impossible to speak of it—words are so thin and poor—I only say:

"How is it you come to see me here?"

"Don't you know? Have you heard nothing?" he asked, surprised.

"No."

"Not from your brother?"

"No."

"Did he not tell you the steps he had taken for your security?"

And there is the shadow of a sneer upon Wilfred's curved lips.

"No—what do you mean?"

"I mean that he went to my brother—odd that he should not have come to me first——"

A deep sense of humiliation steals over me. I hang my head that he may not see the shame that dyes my cheeks.

"And my brother," pursues Wilfred, "treats me to a very pretty tirade, that would have been quite appropriate to a practiced seducer of innocence, but a little overshot the mark in my case. Finally, he insists that the only course left is for me to marry you; and thinking I require a bribe, offers me a very large addition to my present income. And here I am."

Wounded to the quick, I stand before him. There is some-

thing in his tone that makes me feel as though I had known and been a party to forcing myself upon him. For the moment I hate Jack and Vivian Carruthers for what they have done.

"It was very good of our brothers," I say, proudly, drawing away my hand, "to settle everything for us; but they might have waited until they were sure of the consent of the parties. I for one refuse to be given away against my will."

Wilfred looks at me in astonishment.

"What do you mean, child?"

"I mean," cry I, passionately, "that you suspect me of being in the scheme to marry you—that you think I have so little self-respect, that I would consent to be thrust upon a man who, of his own free will, would never have asked me; but you are quite wrong. Nothing would induce me to marry you."

"Why, child," he utters bewildered—"what can you mean?—don't you believe I love you?—don't you believe that the dearest wish of my heart is to have you for my wife?"

"No, I don't," I retort bitterly—"I think you have played with me all along, and—and I never wanted or expected you to marry me; and if I had known what Jack was going to do, I would rather have promised him never to see you again. He has degraded me, and it is very cruel and wicked of him."

"Oh! you silly child!" says my hero, taking my hands with gentle force, and drawing me toward him; "how little you understand me! If ever I had a scruple or a doubt, it was all for your sake. Only tell me you love me so dearly that my love could make a world of itself for you; only say you are content to take me, even if I were steeped in wickedness, and you know I should one day bring misery upon you, and I will devote all my life to making you happy. I will try and change my very nature for your sake. I must have you, child!" he finishes, with sudden passion—"I cannot bear my life without you."

And so, after long talking, it is settled that we shall be married. Finally my father's consent is obtained, and every one of the family is very much taken by surprise. They do not like the idea of my being married off in a hurry, nor of having a very quiet wedding; but on both of these points Wilfred insists, and people seldom think of offering much opposition to his will.

We are to be married on my eighteenth birthday, and to go abroad at once after the wedding. I am quite happy and content that everything shall be ordained by him; but the rest of my family are by no means equally satisfied. They don't like him in their hearts, I can see plainly—they are afraid of his haughty manner, and the air of distant, almost exaggerated courtesy with which he treats them. Fred and Harry detest him—rush out of the house the moment he enters. As for Jack, he has never once set foot in the place since my engagement.

All this makes me uncomfortable, but I console myself by thinking that if everything went smoothly, my happiness would be so great that there would be danger of its being taken from me. And Wilfred comes very rarely—never when he can get me to meet him in the woods, or elsewhere. He does not mock or sneer at me now, but seems to be possessed by a feverish

fondness for me, and a dread of having me out of his sight. He has a strange caprice for making me tell him perpetually that I love him, and that whatever might happen, whatever people might tell me of him, could never change my feelings. I can say that with all truth and sincerity, my heart is so bound up in him, I feel nothing could alter it.

It only wants a week to our wedding-day—we have sat together all the bright summer afternoon beneath our non-talking oak. I no longer rail at its deafness and dumbness—we have so much to say, Wilfred and I, albeit we are not careful to avoid tautology; and what lovers would brook an audience to their sweet folly?

The dusky twilight is stealing on. We have said a hundred times that it is late, and that we must be gone, and yet, hating for that sweet present to grow into a past, we have lingered, wishing each other a thousand good-byes, and so prolonging the dearest moments of the day—dearest for the sting of pain throbbing through the pleasure. We have parted, but turning our heads for a last glance, have paused irresolute, and finally come back to say the word we love and hate yet again. Finally, Wilfred has brought me through the fields of corn that are yellowing once more, to the stile near our house, and with lingering hands we have repeated the more ceremonious and decorous farewell that it behooves us to take now, as we are within range of the windows of Halling Farm.

Another moment, and I am watching his retreating figure, longing for him to turn once more and look at me. I am leaning over the stile, conscious only of one presence—the evening may be ever so fair, the sunset as golden-red, the wild flowers as bright, the scent from the hedge-rows as sweet—they but go to make the unnoticed frame of my picture. I lean my head on my hand in soft reverie, unmindful of all but my sweet thoughts, when a voice breaks upon my ear, making me start and color with uneasy surprise.

"Tell your lucky fortune, my pretty miss—tell your fortune. You'll believe the old gypsy now, as told you true before."

A startled, uncomfortable feeling comes across me; I turn to move toward the house.

"Thank you, I don't want my fortune told," I say civilly, having a kind of absurd superstitious fear of her. "I know it."

"Do you, my pretty miss?" she says quickly. "Not so well, I doubt, but the old gypsy could tell you something more. Let me cross your hand, my dear, like your handsome sweetheart did in the woods. Ah, didn't I tell you now what a grand lover you'd get!"

It is very foolish of me to feel nettled at her silly talk; more foolish still to answer her, but I say quickly:

"That gentleman is nothing at all to me; you were quite wrong."

"Who is, then?" retorts the crone, hastily, "not the other one—not the proud, dark-faced one with the bad smile, as wanted

to turn the poor gypsy off!—not him as you said good-bye to at the stile just now!"

I am annoyed with myself for having condesended to parley with her; more annoyed still that I have no money to send her about her business with; for of course I don't carry a purse—what should one want with money in the woods and corn-fields? I take refuge in silence, quickening my pace toward the garden gate, but she keeps up with me.

"They tell'd me, pretty lady, you was a-goin' to marry the grand gentleman up at the park," she says, "and I think——"

"Oh, that's how you get your information, and pretend to know it all of yourself, is it?"

I open the gate, and as I shut it, say:

"Well, then, if there is anything in your art, you ought to have known they told you wrong."

And with that parting shaft, for I am annoyed at her impertinent persistence, I turn away.

"Don't you have nothing to do with that other one, miss—don't you, now!"

I hear her crying after me, and angry, ruffled, I run into the house, more put out than I care to confess about such a trifle.

My sisters have had the entire management of my trousseau—it has given them a deal of pleasant occupation, which I, being so supremely happy, have not begrudged them. They are bitterly vexed that I am to be married so quietly in our little village church, with no one but our own family present. I think they would have liked a choral service in Coltol Cathedral, graced by the presence of all the neighboring grandees, and are rather inclined to hint that Wilfred's desire for such strict privacy looks as if he was ashamed of me. It does gall me when they now and then seem to throw doubts on his love for me. Mamma has told me that Mr. Carruthers will give his brother two thousand a year from the day he becomes my husband; and that very generosity makes me feel bitter, for it gives my sisters occasion to utter small sneers about disinterested love.

Once or twice I have seen Vivian Carruthers; his manner has been very kind and cold—he seems quite to have forgotten there has been anything between us more than friendship. I wonder a little that he has consented to be present at the wedding; but I rejoice heartily all the same, because it is a crtain proof that he no longer entertains any strong feelings toward me. I do not know now, as I do afterward, that he refused to come, sternly and point-blank; that he promised himself to go away, and not even know the day on which I am to become his brother's wife; but that Wilfred has so strongly urged his presence, has asked him for *my* sake to come, that it may give no occasion for the world to talk, that he is at last prevailed upon.

I only know that my love says to me:

"Why, child, having loved you as I do, I would sooner cut my throat than see you given to another man."

And that speech makes me supremely happy.

---

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### ON THE THRESHOLD.

"I cannot see what pleasures
Or what pains were;
What pale new loves and treasures
New years will bear;
What beam will fall, what shower,
What grief or joy for dower."

My birthday and my wedding-day have come. I am filled with a tremulous excitement—a sense of fear at my own happiness, and I long intensely for the moment when the priest shall join our hands and pronounce us man and wife—until then I shall never lose the terror of something happening to rob me of my love.

Oh, Wilfred, my darling, if I were to lose you! whispers a sudden voice in my heart, I—oh, no, no, that anguish is too horrible even to dream—a merciful God would not visit such unutterable misery on an innocent creature, whose greatest crime is its intense love; and when a remembrance steals over me of the cruel partings that Heaven has looked down upon, I cry to myself, "Oh! their love was not like mine."

I have hardly slept; there is a wild brightness in my eyes as I cast a look in the glass, keenly anxious to look my very, very best on this day that is to make me his.

"In five hours," I say half aloud, speaking to my own reflection in the mirror—"in five hours you will be Doris Carruthers. Doris Carruthers, Doris Carruthers!" I murmur softly. It seems to me

"The sweetest name that ever love
Grew weary of."

The house is astir; already there is a running to and fro. My mother comes in and kisses me more tenderly than I think she ever did before. Then my sisters appear one by one, and have much to say concerning my toilet and my appearance, their dresses, and the shame of there being no witnesses but a few gaping rustics to the imposing spectacle. It is all one to me whether I am married in Westminster Abbey in the presence of royalty, or in the poorest little church in the land, so long as there is a clergyman to join my hand to Wilfred's and my father to give me to him. I hope I am not ungrateful; I love papa and mamma dearly, my sisters in a way, the boys, and oh! Jack best of all, in spite of the shadow that has fallen between us; but all the affection I feel for them is only the merest feather weight compared with that great heart-filling love I have for my husband that is to be to-day.

"How white you are!" says Anna; "do for goodness' sake rub your cheeks and try to get a little color into them;" and she goes off to get a coarse towel for the purpose.

"I wish we had a little rouge," murmurs Fanny, regretfully, who has taken upon herself the office of chief tire-woman.

"There is some in that old dressing-case, that used to be

Grandmamma Keane's," says Julia; and I believe they would really paint my face, if I did not put the most resolute veto upon such a horrible proceeding. They want to braid my hair elaborately, but I am too restless to sit patiently under such a tedious operation; so when they have made one or two futile efforts, I jump up, drag it all down, twisting it up in my own simple fashion, which, for all they declare me a perfect fright, suits me, I know, ten times better than anything else. While they fasten my dress, adjust my wreath and veil, I am in a perfect fever—I feel a wild desire to run up and down, to do anything but stand quiet. Will the time never come?

At last it is twenty minutes past eleven—we are to be in the church by half past, and I am led out for every one to look at. Trembling like a leaf, I stand, my color coming and going rapidly, whilst all the household inspect me, prepared to rush out immediately afterward to the church, to witness the ceremony, that is so unusual an event there. No one of higher grade than a farmer's daughtor has been married in Halling Church these twenty years, and every one for a couple of miles round comes to see the show. Even with all these the church is by no means full; and I think my sisters feel their white grenadine dresses and wreaths of forget-me-nots thrown away upon such a company. However, I am quite sure they would not create more intense admiration or food for conversation amongst a more genteel assembly than they do here. There has been some talk between Fanny and Julia of having children to strew my path with flowers, but they have abandoned the idea as impracticable, owing to a probable want of uniformity in the officiators' costumes, and an undoubted tendency to stand and gape, instead of minding the business of the moment.

Just before I am going to get into the carriage, Jack lifts my veil and gives me one of his own hearty kisses.

"Let by-gone be by-gones, Cissy," he whispers. "God bless you, my dear!" And I am so touched that but for a great effort I think the tears would force themselves down my cheeks.

The only reply possible for me is a fervent grasp of the hand, a clinging kiss.

"Come, Doris!" calls my father; and, very sick and nervous, I ascend the carriage steps, slipping on the first, grazing myself, and nearly tumbling prone into the bottom of the antediluvian vehicle.

In five minutes we are at the church; and as I alight there is quite a small crowd lining the path to the door. I am too nervous to look at any one, but leaning on papa's arm, go in at the door and up the aisle to the altar. Wilfred is not there yet, nor his brother. I feel a little tremulous, and hope with an agonized intensity that he will be in time. Oh! if anything should happen to detain him, and it should strike twelve before Mr. Newton had time to marry us, what should I do? To go over all this again, to have another such a twenty-four hours—I could not endure it.

I try to look composed, and not to tremble so. I take hold of the railings to steady myself. Every one is nervous and fidgety,

and keeps looking at the door, listening for the sound of wheels, and every one is trying not to seem at all anxious.

It wants a quarter to twelve—he has not come—I cannot refrain from saying to myself:

"How cruel of him to make me suffer these tortures!—oh, when will he come, when will he come!"

Ten minutes to twelve, there is a rustle—I catch the sound of hoofs coming rapidly—the clergyman is at the altar; we place ourselves ready to begin the second the bridegroom arrives—there will yet be time to gabble the first part over. I look down on the ground—I dare not glance round for Wilfred, though I hear his hasty steps coming up the aisle.

Another moment, I hear a voice say to papa:

"For God's sake get these people out of the way!"

I feel a hand seize mine, and drag me away into the vestry—when I can look up, I am alone there with Vivian Carruthers. Speechless, with wide-open eyes and parted mouth, I stand staring at him. Speechless he too stands before me. No words will come through my choking throat, though my lips move. Why should I ask a question?—do I not know that the fiat is gone forth, and that my hope is dead?

"Don't look like that, child," cries Vivian, coming nearer. "My God! how shall I tell her?"

At the sound of his voice I draw myself erect and say in a strange, quiet voice:

"You need not be afraid. What! is he dead?"

"No," he groans. "My poor child! Stay, let me go for your mother."

"No," I cry, grasping his arm. "Tell me quick—don't you see I am quite calm."

"He is married already, d—n him!" mutters Vivian between his teeth.

An icy coldness creeps over me—a sudden shiver from head to foot. He stands looking at me with miserable, angry, compassionate eyes.

"Go," I say in a voice that does not seem like mine, "and send all those people away—every one of them, and don't let any one come in here."

And without a word he obeys me.

There is one little chair in the vestry. I sit down upon it and look round me—I can see it now. A tiny whitewashed octagonal room, with a deal cupboard, a few old hymn-books, a surplice hanging from a peg on the wall. A strange feeling of being some one else takes me. I am suffering—only I seem turned to stone.

"Married!" I hear my voice say—"married, Wilfred married—Doris Carruthers—Doris Keane—yes, Doris Keane always now." I take up the thick white silk between my fingers, and look at my lace veil. "No wedding after all," says the strange voice that issues through my lips. Am I going mad? Why don't I feel some anguish or grief!—why don't I burst into bitter crying—why do I only feel stone cold, stone dead! The little door opens

softly—my mother comes in with a flushed face and streaming eyes.

"Oh! my poor child!" she utters, in a broken voice, running toward me; but I crouch against the wall, and put up my hands deprecatingly.

"Don't touch me! don't touch me!" I gasp. "I am all right—I shall not mind much—I know you're sorry for me, only please—please—don't touch me, don't speak to me!"

Mamma looks at me terrified.

"Oh! my poor child!" she says again.

"I shall soon get over it," I mutter, still feeling nothing but that strange deadness, "only don't speak to me, and don't let any one else come near me."

Then I lean my arms on the little deal table, and relapse into silence, whilst my mother weeps and gazes at me; and all this time I feel nothing but a sense of utter vagueness and barrenness. I do not know how long a time passes. Presently papa comes in softly.

"We must get her home," he whispers to mamma.

I rise quite composedly and go toward him.

"Are all the people gone, papa?"

"Yes, my dear."

His voice trembles, his eyes are full of tears; but mine are dry, and my voice unmoved.

"Every one?"

"Yes, dear."

"I am ready, then;" and I put my hand on his arm.

Back we go down the aisle, as we came. I should have been leaning a glad bride on my husband's arm when I recrossed it. I am Doris Keane, without a hope in the world. There is one person still in the church, a tall figure hidden away behind a column. Quietly I slide my hand from papa's arm, and go toward Vivian Carruthers.

"Tell me," I say, in a clear, distinct voice, when I am close to him—"he did not know she was alive?"

Silence, and my heart gives the first prick of returning life.

"He did not?" I say again, questioning, though I affirm it sharply.

"God help you, child!—I wish I could say so."

"Ah!" and I hear a strange, long-drawn sob. Was that my voice?

Again I put my hand on papa's arm, and we issue forth through the lonely graveyard, where the bright, fierce sun beats down upon the grassy mounds of the quiet dead.

The dead! To be thinking of them—thinking, ay, longing to be one of them, and half an hour before I had come through a young girl, tricked out in her bravery, to be married to the man she loved, with never a thought of death or the dead, or that this place was used for aught save to join the happy willing hands of men and women who loved as Wilfred and I did.

There stands the fly that brought us, with its two old white horses, the wedding-pair kept by the Colton job-master. No white favor ornaments the breast of the driver, and his face is

bent down on the harness. Up the road some distance off Mr. Carruthers' impatient chestnuts are pawing the ground. I ought to be sitting behind them this moment, with Wilfred's hand pressing mine. All these thoughts occur distinctly to me. I get into the carriage, and we drive back to Halling Farm. One great desire fills me—to reach my room and lock myself in fast.

There is no one about when we return—silence has fallen on the place; but as I go toward the stairs I see the dining-room door ajar, the table spread with the wedding-breakfast, and the great bride-cake in the midst. I wonder vaguely if the party will sit down to the feast without the bride and bridegroom; whether they will cut the cake, and if Harry will enjoy it as much now that I am heart-broken as if I had been a happy bride. At my own door I turn to my mother, who still follows.

"Mamma," I say, beseechingly, "I want to be alone—do not let any one come to trouble me or to ask after me. I shall be all right."

"Don't fret, my darling child," utters poor mamma, with streaming eyes; "don't now, there's a dear."

"No," I answer quietly, and retreat into my own room, locking the door. Still I am quite, quite quiet—there is only the dull pain at my heart. I know the time is coming presently when my agony will break out; but it has not come yet. Going to the glass, I look at my white face, half expecting to see some great and awful change that shall make me unrecognizable even to myself; but, no, I am just the same as when I last looked, only that my eyes have lost their wild brightness, and are dull and glassy.

"Look at yourself, Doris Keane," I say, in my new strange voice; "you will never be decked out like this again, if you live to be an old woman," and then mechanically I take the orange blossoms from my hair, and unfasten my wedding gown. In its stead I put on an old blue cotton, and sit down by the side of the little bed that has not been made to-day.

"Eighteen," I mutter, still in the same audible tone—"to-day is my birthday, and I am eighteen—I have fifty-two more years to live, perhaps—three times as many as I have lived already. And in all that time I shall never love, and never be loved again."

I am beginning to awake, as a nearly drowned man comes painfully to life after his long swoon. I think to myself how, now, this moment, I ought to be sitting side by side with Wilfred, in front of the great bride-cake, listening to the little speeches, and having *our* healths drunk. I picture all to myself—how I should have come back once more to this little room to take off my bridal attire, and don the peach silk and white bonnet that I was to go away in. I see the fretting horses that are to take us to Colton Station in Vivian's brougham, and the crowd of faces round the door come out to see us off. I see the old shoes thrown after us for luck, which I have begged in my poor superstitious heart might not be forgotten. I catch sight for the last time of Jack's hearty, loving face shining in full

kindness and forgiveness now I am going away from him forever. We are to leave Colton by the afternoon express for London, and to-morrow we are to go abroad. And then I start up with a sudden cry of "Never now. Oh Wilfred!" And with that cry my senses come back to me, the full flood of agony is upon me, and I throw myself upon the bed, with my face buried in the pillows, and my teeth gnawing them to stifle the cries and sobs of my unbearable anguish.

"Wilfred, Wilfred, Wilfred!" My lips go on framing that one word only, with passionate reproach, passionate entreaty, passionate longing. In my insensate misery, in my despair, I wish it had never been known until after we were married, and then, wicked or not wicked, I would never have left him. What was all the world to me? What could he do that I could not forgive him, so only he loved me? "Wilfred—my Wilfred!" and then with a great shudder, "Not *my* Wilfred!"

I begin to wonder vaguely who is that other woman—the one to whom he of right belongs. Does she love him? I know he does not care for her—oh, I know that I am all the world to him now, though he was indifferent to me once. I feel no bitterness against him, no thought that he meant to do me a grievous wrong—was it not all for love's sake? All my bitter wrath is turned upon those who came between us and prevented our happiness. Oh, if they had only left us for one short month to our heaven, we should have had the remembrance to live upon all the long years after, however sore and bitter they might be.

So I cry and rave to myself in my mad misery, neither knowing nor caring if it is wicked and foolish, feeling no thankfulness for my escape from such a pitfall, only anger at the cruel violence with which I have been torn back from it.

If I could only cry—if only tears would come; but my agony is too great. Dry sobs choke my throat until I gasp for breath, all my quivering frame is torn with anguish, but not one single tear comes to my hot, aching eyes.

"Oh Wilfred, Wilfred, Wilfred!" still I go on moaning out his name, while the long hours go by and the great hot sun wends his way across the glaring sky.

---

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### ONCE MORE.

"Sweeter to rest together dead,
Far sweeter than to live asunder."

"Look in my face and say if there is aught
I have not dared, I would not dare for thee."

THE broad red shadows fall across my little room at sundown, lie upon the walls, and streak the faded carpet. I look out and see a crimson sky, beyond the dark green mass of trees in the Southcote Woods, and hear the cathedral clock boom out eight—we should have been in London by now. I am quiet again, and sit still near the open window, that the faint breeze may

come in to cool my throbbing brow. I have kept my door resolutely locked—have eaten nothing and admitted no one. My mother has been up several times entreating admission, imploring me to take some food, but I have refused. I cannot see any one, and eating would choke me. There is a knock now.

"Doris, my dear child, *do* let me in!"

"Oh! mamma, I am all right," I answer wearily; "please let me be alone."

"I don't want to come in, dear; only you must eat something, and drink a little wine—you will be ill."

"If you will put it down I will take it in, mamma," I answer.

I hear her deposit her burden outside and go away; then, opening the door softly, I take it in. I try very hard to swallow a mouthful, but it chokes me; then put the wine to my lips, but that is worse. I resume my seat by the window, still holding the glass; something flies suddenly past me, smashing it to atoms, and spilling the red wine all over me. I start violently, my nerves are so shaken that the fright makes me turn sick and faint. When I look up, there is a stone on the floor beside me, with something white near it. Trembling, I stoop to pick up a paper with these words written upon it:

"My darling, if ever you loved me in your life, come out to me in the woods. I shall wait there until midnight. You may never see me again."

A great trembling seizes me—how shall I get to him unseen, for I never dream of disobeying the summons. If I go round by the back way, I must pass the kitchen window. The servants will see me, I shall be stopped, or followed, for they will suspect at once on what errand I am bound; and my family would sooner send me into a lion's den, I know, than to Wilfred.

He will be there until midnight—very well, I shall wait till every one is in bed, and then steal out like a thief in the night. Oh! those weary hours that come between!—how shall I get through them? I pace up and down, half mad with impatience, but am obliged to sit down again; my knees tremble, I feel so weak. Then I bethink myself that it is because I have eaten nothing. I must eat, I say resolutely to myself, or perhaps my strength will fail, and I shall not get to him. So, sitting down to the table, I eat what mamma has brought me, though it is absolute pain to swallow, and drink a glass of water.

Nine o'clock strikes clear through the evening air. Again mamma knocks at the door. This time I open it. She comes in softly, and looks wisfully at me. I know she is longing to take me in her sheltering arms, to press me to her mother's heart, with that true, tender woman's instinct that makes the suffering child the dearest; and going up I kiss her. I could not have done it an hour ago, but now that I am to see him once more my anguish is half forgotten.

"My poor, dear lamb," she says, and bursts into tears; but my eyes are dry—it is I who soothe her.

"Do not be unhappy for me, mamma," I whisper. "I shall

get over it. You know people don't die of broken hearts," and I even smile.

She looks at me bewildered—then her glance falls on the table.

"Ah," she says, with a sigh of relief, "that is a good girl to have eaten something. I shall get you some more."

"No, no, no—not another morsel."

"But——" and she looks at my stained dress and the broken glass.

"Yes, it is broken," I mutter.

"Let me fetch you another glass, dear; you want something—it will do you good. What's this?" picking the stone off the ground. "However did it come here?" and I turn away to conceal my confusion.

"Will you go to bed soon, love?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Then I will make it for you, dear—you won't like Hepzibah in."

And I stand by the window watching her as she smoothes out the pillows and folds the sheets, thinking what a great thing a mother's love is, and accusing myself of ingratitude for her tenderness.

"You will try and sleep, dear," she says, kissing me fondly.

"Yes, mamma," and I begin to take off my dress. I hate deceit, but is not this life or death to me?

"Good-night, my dear love. God bless you!—don't fret more than you can help;" and with humid eyes she glances back at me from the door-way with a loving nod.

Presently I hear her low voice speaking in the porch to papa.

"She seems quiet, but looks strange. I don't think she has cried at all—but then she never does, and I think people who have no tears suffer the most."

"Poor soul, poor soul!" mutters papa, his voice broken with pity.

"I think she means to go to bed now," says mamma. "We won't any of us be up late to-night. Oh, how thankful I shall be when this dreadful day is over!"

"God curse that blackguard!" utters papa in a deep concentrated voice; and I shrink away from the window, not wanting to hear any more.

Ten o'clock. I hear my sisters come up to their rooms, stopping as they pass to listen at my door. I do not stir—there is no light, and they pass on. Then Fred and Harry go past, then mamma, then the servants. It is half-past ten; I am quivering from head to foot with anxiety. Though he has said "till midnight," I feel a horror lest he shall have given me up and gone. I know his impatience. There is a sound of footsteps upon the gravel. I, peeping behind the curtain, see papa with Jack. They go out of the gate up the road. Now is my time. Hurriedly I slip on a dress, throw a shawl over my shoulders, a little hood upon my head, with which I can, if I choose, conceal my face, and softly unclosing the door steal down the stairs with a furious beating at my heart. Once amongst the tall corn I am

safe; but there is the road to cross first. I steal round the back way to the gate, but papa's and Jack's voices are coming toward me, and I crouch behind a great bush of evergreen. They pass close beside me—oh! how thankful I am that none of the dogs are with them! As it is I am half dead with terror, but they go in, bolting the door behind them. How shall I get in on my return? A cold perspiration breaks out upon me. Well, I care not; they may know all when it is too late to stop my going.

The moon has risen, the night is exquisite, light almost as day, and I crouch along by the hedgeside, and then dart across the road, fearful of being seen from the windows. Once in the fields, away I race to the woods, and as I come up to the stile, the clock booms eleven.

Wilfred's figure is before me. In a moment he has vaulted the stile, and I am in his arms sobbing—yes, sobbing as if my heart would break, with a great rain of tears blinding my eyes, part anguish, part joy.

A long silence, broken only by his soft caresses, his tender words, and then, when I at last look up in his face, I see a wild, haggard, hunted look there that frightens me.

"Come, darling!" he says feverishly. "Come away from here! You may be missed and tracked to this place: let us hide ourselves away somewhere in the woods until I have told you."

He gets over the stile and lifts me after him. I am so weak and trembling, all my strength has forsaken me. He puts my hand through his arm, and hurries me along the steep path, checkered with bright rays of strong white light and reflected tracery from the heavy branches above.

I have forgotten that he is another woman's husband as I toil along the steep path, happy because I am clinging to his strong arm. I have forgotten the past agony, forgotten what lies before me in the future; I feel no weariness, no pain. I am with him.

Oh! great and wasted love, why do we so often give our heart's gold for naught?

At last we come out into the broad, full moonlight, on the ridge of a hill looking down into the quiet valley, where lie the dark trees and the silver shimmering water. Under a clump of beeches is a rustic bench; there we sit down, Wilfred and I, for this our last meeting in the woods.

"Oh, child!" he cries suddenly, in a vehement broken voice, catching me to his breast—"and you would have been my wife now!"

His words recall me to my senses, and I tear myself away from him.

"Already!" he says bitterly; and then with infinite tenderness —"Little Doris!"

And so moved am I by his sad tones, so dearly I love him, that I can utter no reproach, but only sit and weep helplessly.

"Child, what shall I say to you?" and he takes my hands with tender force. "Oh, little darling, don't you believe it was for love of you? I thought I could make you happy—I thought

I could be all the world to you, and I could not part from you, my darling—you know I tried, and it nearly drove me mad."

Still I can only answer by my sobs.

"Doris—look at me!" And I raise my eyes to his beautiful dark ones, that have such a terrible haunted look in them. "Can't you see how I suffer?" he asks, passionately; "don't you know that for the last fifteen hours I've been suffering the torments of the lost? Oh! child, I dare say you have been miserable all this long bitter day, but you haven't had the crushing pain of feeling it was all through your own accursed folly. Do you hate me, or will you listen while I tell you this wretched story?"

"I am listening," I answer feebly.

"Put your head on my breast, darling, as you used," he pleads, drawing me toward him, but I start away.

"No, no, no!" I cry, "go on."

"If you have lost all the old love for me," he says, bitterly, "why should I try to justify myself in your eyes? You had better leave me, believing me an unmitigated blackguard—it will make the past all the easier to forget."

"I should not love you less," I answer, my breath coming thick and painfully, "whatever you have done. I didn't love you because you were good, or great, or noble. I loved you because I could not help it: and I can't change now, because—because——"

"Because what, child?" he utters, with feverish passion. "Because I'm a dishonorable villain—because I have tried to ruin your life, and been frustrated by a merciful Providence?"

I can't bear that bitter, sneering tone.

"I don't care what you've done," I answer him. "I forgive you, and I love you with all my heart. So much, that I shall never in all my life love any one else."

"Say that again," he cries, passionately. "Say it—swear it!"

And he tries the second time to take me in his arms, but I spring away, and stand upright before him.

"Never any more," I cry; "when I saw you first, I forgot in my mad misery that you were another woman's husband."

"Curse her!" he mutters, bitterly. "Oh! Doris, this last time!"

And the old, pleading tones make me half waver.

"No," I say, nerving myself again. "I will not lay my head on your breast, nor let you kiss me ever any more."

"Why, what love is this!" he cries, scoffingly—"a fair weather love, that shrinks and dies when a cloud passes over it. Why, child!" grasping my arm, "did you never read, even if you have not felt it—did you never *read* how men and women have loved, have been all the world to each other, have grown into stronger, deeper, intenser love for every blast and storm that blew against them? Why, your poor, weak little love is like the house we are told of in your Bible, that was built upon sand, and when the winds blew and the storm beat, it fell—but mine, child" (passionately), "mine is like the house that was built upon the rock, and come good days, come evil days, sun-

shine, or the maddest fury of the tempest, it will stand immovable, firm, stancher for all the wild waves beating against it."

The dear voice goes well home, the old love thrills me through and through, but I know the false fair sophistry is poison to my soul. I see right on one hand, and wrong on the other. I can yet distinguish, and, nerving myself, say:

"Tell me about *her* now."

"What shall I tell you?" he answers, bitterly. "I want you to forget, for once at least, that there is such a personage as Mrs. Wilfred Carruthers."

Again that harsh, savage sneer.

"Perhaps," I say, trembling, and with a hushed voice, "perhaps she might—might die some day;" and I almost feel as if I had been guilty of breaking the sixth commandment in my heart.

"Die!—she!" he laughs out loud. "Why, you poor little tender white-faced thing, you will be dead, in your grave, with a big tree grown up over you, while she is a hale, hearty woman; and I—oh, little one!" and the voice softens to its sweetest, tenderest inflection, "I wish we could die here together now, with my arms round you, and never be parted any more—not even in our grave."

"So do I!" I answered with intense eagerness.

"People don't die when they want to," he says, relapsing into bitterness; "when the world is at the zenith of its dearness, we drop off like ripe apples in the autumn time; but when we long and pray and yearn to die, the life clings hard in us, and won't be stamped out. No, no, child, you and I will live to know many a bitter heartache yet—never fear."

Midnight rings out through the clear air.

"Do you hear?" I cry, frightened at being out there with him in this dead night-time. "I must go soon; and you have told me nothing yet that I came out to hear."

"Why should you go? Are you impatient to have the last hour we shall ever spend together over? Well, well, I will tell you, since you are so keen to be gone. Four years ago I was yachting, and put in at a little village on the southern coast—you want the whole charming romance from the very beginning?"

I nod my head.

"Well," he continues, in the same scoffing tone, "there it is my good fortune to behold a young goddess, sapphire-eyed and raven tressed, with a figure molded like a Diana. I make advances to this paragon of beauty, which she, like the chaste huntress, scornfully repels. So

"'I loved and I rode away.'

but some time later that meddling jade Fortune threw me into a country house ten miles distant from the same fishing village; and finding the time hang heavy on my idle hands I thought I'd give Satan the chance of finding some mischief for them to do, as Watts says in his exquisite poems. I suppose you know him by heart, don't you, you good, well-brought-up young lady?"

"Don't!" I muttered, entreatingly—"don't speak to me like that. You are not like yourself. That hard, mocking voice makes me wretched."

"Well, well," he says, sharply, "let me get over this pleasant story as well and quickly as may be. I walked over to the fishing village where I had seen the girl. A terrific storm came on, which prevented my returning, and I stopped the night at the only inn in the place, and a wretched hole it was.

"The storm raged all night and all the next day; there was no thought of walking ten miles through it, though heaven had been at the end of the journey; and late in the afternoon my host came to inform me there was a ship in distress out at sea, 'as most likes 'ud be a wreck afore midnight.' The idea was exciting. I had never seen a good wreck; so I borrowed some tarpaulins and ran down to the beach, where some two score of men and women were already assembled, my nymph among the lot. I haven't time to gratify your feminine love of sensation with a graphic account of the excitement and the fear, the hopes, the prayers, the oaths and ejaculations that went on around me, and how the good ship came pitching along to her destruction. Suffice it, she was wrecked on the big black rocks close in upon shore, and that we did our best to save the few poor devils who could cling on to them long enough."

"And you too, Wildred!" I cry, with eager face bent forward, and hands tight clasped, happy at the thought of my love being a real hero, "you helped to save them!"

"Yes; my blood was up, and I took my turn like a fool, which ended in my saving one poor fellow, only for twelve hours though—he died in the night—and getting knocked on the head, so that I was brought in insensible."

"Oh, Wilfred!" I murmur, glad at heart; "but you risked your life then to save him."

"I was pretty tired of life then," he answers carelessly, "and it was worth the wild emotion it gave me. However, the long and short of it was that I was carried to the nearest cabin, which by the devil's own luck belonged to the father of my black-haired sea-nymth—Mr. Silas Tucker at your service—my father-in-law."

"What!" I cry, unable to repress my wondering horror, "your wife is a common woman!"

"The commonest of the common," he answers with bitter politeness, "a fish wench, who could not write her own name."

---

## CHAPTER XXX.

WILFRED.

"For good it were, if anything be good,
To comfort me in this pain's plague of mine,
Seeing thus, how neither sleep, nor bread, nor wine,
Seems pleasant to me; yea, no thing that is."

I RELAPSE into silent anguish; and he resumes his story, more bitter-voiced than before.

"She nursed me for three weeks, night and day, this common

fish-girl, for I was light-headed, and they did not know whom I belonged to, or anything about me—thought, as they had seen me come in a yacht before, that it had put in for shelter further up the coast, or been lost in the storm perhaps. I don't know or care what they thought. Anyhow, I was in no condition to answer questions, for I was down with fever and light-headed. Naturally while I was getting well, I fell in love with my nurse, who was as cunning as the devil himself. It's no good going into a psychological argument with you, child," (impatiently), "or trying to explain the difference between the love I feel for you and the passion—faugh!" (with intense disgust)—"I had for her. Both are strong enough to make men mad sometimes. And to be tied down for a month and see only one woman, if she happens to be beautiful, or you fancy her—well, enough! I tell you she was cunning, and I light-headed, and, between it all, why, wherefore, or what madness possessed me, I don't know, but when she was determined to be made a lady of, a lady!" (with bitter sarcasm), "or to send me about my business, I married her, and it is this *common* woman, this low fish-girl, that stands between us and our heaven. Yes, little Doris, look at me with your wide-open, wondering eyes, and see what a maniac a man is capable of being made for the sake of a miserable, unrestrained passion!"

"And was it she who prevented our marriage?" I say quietly, with something of contempt for my hero coming over me the first time in my life.

"Yes—she appeared *in propria persona* this morning while I was at breakfast. If it had only been four-and-twenty hours later!" he says, grimly looking far away under his bent brows.

A strange mixture of feeling is battling in my breast—my great love for him, my anguish at parting from him forever, and the bitterness of feeling that he could deliberately plan the ruin of my life. Would a man who was honest and true consent to degrade and mar the future of the woman he loved, for his selfishness' sake? I am suffering my worst pang now, in the conviction that my hero is unworthy.

"Good-bye, Wilfred," I say in a low voice, turning to go.

"What!" he cries, starting, "you are going to leave me—to leave me like that, when you know it is our last meeting? So, then" (bitterly), "that is your great love!"

"I am going like that," I answer, in a choked voice, "because I no longer believe in you."

And the harsh words grieve me a thousandfold more in the utterance than they can pain him.

"You are going," he retorts, with a harsh sneer, "because, after the manner of your sex, you draw back the moment the way does not seem pleasant and smooth to you."

"No," I cry, passionately, "it is not so. I have loved you with all my heart, and I love you still; but you have wantonly deceived me—you would have sacrificed all my life, and then, perhaps, when you tired of me, would have left me in disgust, like the woman that is your wife."

"Doris!" He is on his knees with his arms thrown round

me. "You don't believe that, child! say you don't. What! do you think I am such a blackguard as to have premeditated your ruin, and carried it out in cold blood? Do you think it has cost *me* nothing?—do you think my mind hasn't been a hell of fear and remorse ever since I gave in to my passionate love of you? I tried to keep away—tried hard—did I ever, by word or deed, seek to take advantage of your innocence? It was only at last when my love grew too strong for me, when it was torture to me to be away from you a day, when I felt that you were miserable without me, and believed I could make your life happy in spite of everything, that I gave in. And, darling, so I would and can now. Come with me, and I swear to devote every hour of my life to making atonement to you for my wrong."

His tone of vehement entreaty almost frightens me. I shrink away from him.

"What have you to live for here?" he goes on passionately. "What will your life be henceforth? What will the years hold for us when we are parted forever, when we are gone for all time out of sight and hearing of each other?—when there is nothing before us but one great dreary blank, a miserable day that has no to-morrow. Won't you, in your loneliness and wretchedness, feel it would have been a thousand times better to endure some reproach for the sake of the man who loved you from his soul, than just for a mere commonplace mockery the world calls reputation, to be eating your heart out, and wishing yourself dead, and quit of your misery every day of your life?"

"I know what my life will be," I say, faintly. "I don't expect any more happiness in this world; but I don't think it will be so hard as if I were haunted by remorse that I could never get away from."

"Remorse!" he answers, quickly, "why remorse? Pshaw, child, you are overridden with old wives' fables! There would be no sin in it. Why were we given the power to love as you and I do if it was only meant to torture us? So long as we were faithful to each other, as I swear before Heaven to be to you, there is no sin, no wrong. Our only crime is against society, and that will punish us in its own way. But, darling, what do you care for society—what is the world to you—what can it make you lose that I cannot atone to you for?"

His voice has the old power over me—I feel a puppet in his hands, and yet something stronger in my heart makes me combat his influence.

"Let me go!" I entreat, trying to drag myself away from him. "Why do you tempt me?"

But I am as nothing in his strong grasp, and he holds me faster yet, while he says, in his impassioned tones:

"Child, won't you give up something for my sake? Have you no thought of what my life will be if you leave me? I know it has been worthless and useless so far, but for your sake I would try to become something better—it could not help but be under your sweet influence. Won't you be my good angel, and try to

save me?" he pleads in that dear voice that is still all potent in my poor, weak heart. "If you leave me I shall go headlong to the devil—my future will be blasted beyond all reclaim. Child, will you not hinder that, now it is all in your power?"

I am sobbing bitterly, and still the resistless voice goes on, murmuring, "For my sake, if you love me."

What if, after all, I yield, and my heart gives a wild bound at the thought. How shall I endure my life without him?—how drag on a bare existence with the knowledge that I have clasped that dear hand and listened to that loved voice for the last time! Could I suffer more from the world's scorn—that world for which I care nothing—than from the loss of him? My heart is fain to yield, and yet something still holds me back. No, no, no! it says to me you *can* choose between right and wrong; if you sin with your eyes open, be sure it will find you out.

And so I plead to him in an agony of despair.

"Oh, Wilfred, don't tempt me! you ought to help me, because it is so hard. Do you think I don't know what my life will be—how miserable, how lonely, how bitter—don't you know that the greatest happiness in the world seems to me your constant presence, and that I have to fight sore and hard against my love of you? Don't make it harder for me. I know we should be punished somehow if we did wrong—in some way it would be made ten times more bitter for us than if I leave you now I know it is my duty. And don't harden your heart, darling, and go persistently to your ruin—because that would make my misery unbearable. Try for my sake to do right, and I will try to bear my sorrow for yours, and then somehow it will be made right to us. Wish me good-bye, Wilfred, dear Wilfred, and let me go now. Hark, it is striking one!"

The moon is still bright. I see a sudden fury come into his face, and he cries:

"By Heaven, you sha'n't leave me! I swear you——" and he catches violently hold of me.

Terrified, I resist and tear myself away from him; in the effort my foot slips, and I fall forward against the rudely-cut bench.

One of the sharp stakes tears a wound in my cheek—I feel the blood spurting out over me.

"What have I done—my darling!—Doris!" he cries in agony, with great beads standing out on his forehead. But I don't mind the pain, though I feel sick and faint. I am thankful for anything to divert the channel of his passion.

I am standing against the tree, ghastly white I know in the moonlight, with the blood trickling in red heavy drips down me, and he is horror-struck, all the violence sobered out of him.

"I want to go home," I mutter faintly. "I am worn out."

"Poor little child!" he says, with a great pity in his voice, "What a brute I have been to you! I daren't keep you now, since you are suffering—great Heaven!" he breaks off suddenly, "it drives me mad to see your blood—come quick to the water!" And in a moment he has seized me in his arms like a baby, and in rushing off to the big water-pool in the hollow. I lie quite

still, with a sense of tired faintness; and when he is bathing my face with his handkerchief I keep my eyes shut in sheer weariness.

"Doris, look at me!" he says in agonized voice. I believe he thinks I am dying—oh! if I could only die like this!

The wound has ceased bleeding, and I stagger to my feet.

"But, child," he whispers, "have you thought how you are going to get back? What if some one should hear you?"

I don't tell him that the door is bolted, and that I must necessity call some one down—that would be an additional weapon for him against my return. Somehow I have lost all dread of my family—weariness and intense emotion have stupefied me.

"Leave me here," I entreat, when he has lifted me tenderly over the stile; but he refuses.

"Not till I have seen you into the lane," he answers resolutely.

So we walk on, I leaning painfully and wearily on his arm, half blind, and wholly worn out.

"I daren't press you now, my own love," he whispers, in his low carressing voice.

"I shall wait in London till I hear from you. When you find your life to hard to bear—and, my darling, if you feel for me what I do for you, you will find it too hard—write to me to the Club, and bid me come, or say you are coming to me. Promise me so much."

"Yes," I answer, too weary to resist.

We are coming near the house. I look up, and, to my dismay, see lights flickering about the windows. An agony comes across me that my absence is discovered.

"Wilfred!" I almost shriek. "Do you see—they are looking for me! Go back—go back, I entreat you! If they find us together I shall die."

We are close to the gate—a dark figure comes up suddenly the other side.

"Would to God you were dead, sooner than disgraced like this!" says a furious voice, and Jack springs over the gate and with a bitter imprecation aims a blow at Wilfred. Like lightning he responds, but in a second I have thrown myself between them. The blood flows from my cheek again—I feel a stunning blow on my head, not meant for me—am just conscious of a smothered cry from two men's voices, and then I remember no more.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW.

"Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?"

FOR some days after this night on which I am carried insensible to my room I do not leave it. The doctor has said that I

must be kept very quiet, free from all excitement, or he will not answer for the consequences. No one comes to see me but mamma or Hepzibah, to bring what I want and to arrange the room.

I have a vague consciousness of having done something very wrong, and being under the ban of my family's displeasure. Mamma comes to me, but, though she does not allude to the past, her manner is changed, and has lost all that tenderness which she showed me on the first day of my great sorrow. I am filled with an overwhelming sense of weariness and pain; my life is done; my heart is broken. I am too worn-out for tears or paroxysms of anguish; now and then a long-drawn sigh comes from the very depths of my soul, and I turn my head over on the pillow.

When I see myself the first time I am frightened. My face is ghastly white; there are heavy rings under my eyes, and on my left cheek a great black swollen wound. Shall I have the mark always, I wonder, to remind me of that terrible night in my life?

On the third day I rise and, dressing myself, sit by the window. On the fourth I long to get out again—the room seems like a prison to me. A vague wonder crosses my mind whether I shall be allowed to leave it when I choose. When mamma comes I say to her:

"I am tired of this room. I shall go down to-day."

She fidgets about and looks out of the window. Presently she says, turning to me:

"I don't want to bring up a painful subject, but before I can consent to your leaving your room I must know what you mean to do."

"Mean to do!" I echo.

"Of course we know you have had a great trial, Doris, and we are very sorry for you, but you have deceived us so that we cannot feel very much confidence in you; and after your *fatal* imprudence we think it necessary to keep a perpetual watch upon you."

"Do you mean my going to bid him good-bye for the last time?" I say with trembling lips.

"I mean your being out for hours in the dead of night with an unprincipled man like—— Of course," mamma interrupts herself very quickly, "you are very young and inexperienced, and don't know how the world judges such things, but still I should have thought your own pride and sense would tell you the folly and danger of meeting a man in that way to whom you stood in such—such a painful position. Indeed I can't understand your ever consenting to see or speak with him again, after the disgrace and injury he had inflicted upon you."

"Mamma," I falter. "I—I loved him so, that when he wanted to see me once more, I could not help going to him."

"But what means had he of communicating with you?" she asks.

And then I tell her the whole story.

"It is a most unfortunate business," she murmurs. "I don

know what is to come of it, I'm sure. Your papa and brother think you ought to leave the place."

"Why?" I ask.

"Because every one will be talking about you; it is all over the place already, I dare say. One can't help servants talking."

"What do you mean?" I cry, a new terror seizing me.

"I mean that you being alone with him in the woods for several hours will make people say very injurious things about you. His being married, of course, was a dreadful thing, and every one would have pitied you very much, but now after your terrible imprudence——"

"But why need any one know?" I exclaim, eagerly.

"Because the moment he missed you, your papa went off to Mr. Carruthers; and however careful one may be, you can't help servants knowing everything."

"How did you come to miss me?" I ask.

"I could not sleep for thinking of you, and went to your room to look at you. The door was ajar—you were gone—the bed had not been slept in. That was half-past twelve. I woke your papa, of course, and he immediately thought you had gone off with—with that man. So he rode off at once to Southcote Park, and Jack said he would go through the woods to look for you—it was just a chance that you might have wandered off alone there. Mr. Carruthers was in a terrible way—it's to be hoped he and his brother did not meet that night."

For the first time I feel the full conviction of my own madness in going to Wilfred, and gasp out:

"Oh! mamma, what shall I do!"

"You can't do anything now," she answers, "except promise us never to see him again. You won't want to do so, I should think, after this; for you must see that if he had really been fond of you, he would never have brought this fearful disgrace and trouble upon you. One cannot understand these things—I suppose it is the perversity of human nature; but, as your papa says, it seems as if you were possessed, to refuse such a man as Mr. Carruthers, and take up with a—a ruffian like his brother. I'm told he's in a dreadful way—hasn't been outside the house, and hardly touched food since. And—and we cannot tell what you may do next, or what madness may take you—it is just as likely, your papa says, that you may take it into your head to go after that bad man—he seems to possess some dreadful influence over you."

"So you are going to shut me up," I say bitterly.

"Not if you give your solemn promise never to hold any communication with him again."

I remain silent, and presently mamma goes away. I dread meeting my sisters, more still papa; but I cannot remain any longer here alone, and go down-stairs to the drawing-room. My sisters are all there, but not one of them speaks to me as I enter. My heart is full—I feel their unkindness bitterly. If they had shown me just a little sympathy, a grain of sisterly tenderness—but no, a few cold looks askance, an utter ignoring of my presence—that

is the way in which they meet me after my four miserable days of solitude.

When we go in to dinner, papa seems not to see me; he is busying himself at the sideboard with the wine, and even Harry looks awkwardly at me, and does not like to speak. But I notice that they all stare surreptitiously at me when they think I am not looking. Mamma is the only person who addresses a word to me. When, after dinner is over, I stroll out into the garden, I feel my movements are watched; and at night as I am going to bed, and the key turns softly in my door, a wild desire comes over me to rush away from the terrible life of coldness and distrust that lies before me, even if I do not go to Wilfred. Only to get away somewhere; where no one would know me or have the power to make me feel like the wretched pariah, the disgraced outcast I have done to-day.

The next morning there comes a basket of hot-house flowers and fruit for Miss Doris Keane from the master of Southcote Park. My heart warms to him as it has never done before; I do indeed feel intensely grateful for this mark of his sympathy so sorely needed just now. My sisters stare and look as much annoyed as surprised, but they eat the peaches and grapes that I timidly offer them. I overhear Julia saying to Fanny, "He surely can't be such a fool as to want to marry her now," and Fanny answering, "Of course not. I don't know what he ever did see in her. She never was good-looking, and she is downright frightful now with that great mark in her face. I wonder how she got it?"

"I suppose we shall never have a chance of marrying, now she has disgraced us so," says Julia, bitterly. "It would hardly have been worse if she had gone off with him; and then we should not have had her white face always prowling about, and looking as if she was suffering martyrdom in some good cause."

Oh! the unknown bitterness their cruel words cause me! I rush to my room and cry to myself, "Oh, I can't bear it! I can't bear it!"

One morning, as we are at breakfast, the servant comes in and tells mamma that a stranger wants to see her, who will give neither her name nor business. After some little discussion as to the propriety of seeing her at all, mamma goes out. A few minutes later, as I am coming in from feeding my chickens, I hear her voice calling to me.

"Doris, I want you for a moment," and she precedes me into the now empty dining-room. "There is some one," she begins, hesitatingly, "some one here who wants to see you."

The color flushes into my face, as intuition of who that some one is comes to me.

"Who is it?" I ask, quickly.

"*His*—wife," mamma answers, slowly.

"I won't see her," I say, hastily.

"She seems very anxious, and—I think I would if I were you."

Dropping into a chair, I lean my head on my hands, my heart

beating painfully. So I remain for a few moments, while mamma waits patiently.

"Very well, I will go," I answer, rising suddenly, and with a strange fluttering make my way toward the door.

"Where is she?"

"In the little room."

I go through the passage, pausing a moment with my hand on the door, before I can command myself sufficiently to enter. As I open it, a tall figure turns from the window, and comes toward me. We stand facing each other—she who is, I who should have been—Wilfred's wife.

My first thought is the feminine curiosity to see if she is handsome. Well, one need not look twice—there can be no two opinions on that—she *is* beautiful—more beautiful than any one I have ever seen in my life—ten times more beautiful than Lady Cecil, who has hitherto been my ideal. Masses of raven black hair low on the brow; great eyes of deepest blue, with long curled lashes, and the fairest skin I have ever seen warmed in the cheeks by the palest tinge of pink, like the heart of a shell. She is much taller than I, but her figure seems extremely graceful. A pang of pain shoots through me as I feel how white and small I must look to her, disfigured too as I am by the wound in my face. The table is between us—she looks at me a moment before speaking. Her voice, when I hear it, has a wonderful sweetness, in spite of its hurried nervousness.

"I wanted so to see you, miss," she begins. "I hope I have not made too bold, but I felt I could not leave this place without just speaking a word or two to you."

"Yes," I say mechanically. "Won't you sit down?" and I drop into a chair, but she remains standing.

"I dare say, miss," she continues, making long pauses between her sentences, and then bringing the words out quickly, though with still the same sweet intonation—"I dare say it's not very pleasant for you to see me, and mayhap you feel bitter to me, and look on me as the cause o' your sorrow. You're a lady, and fit for him; and I never was, and I ought to have had the strength to ha' set my face firmer against it. But" (her voice growing piteous) "I did love him so. You think, pr'aps, we common folk don't have the same feeling as you ladies; but it seems to me they're deeper with us who haven't no head knowledge or learning—our hearts gets so full because we haven't nothing else to take the thoughts off."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### IDOL AND WORSHIPERS.

"I have put my days and dreams out of mind—
Days that are over, dreams that are done.
Though we seek life through, we shall surely find
There is none of them clear to us now, not one."

THERE is a long pause. I find nothing to say, but wait for her to continue.

"Of course," she goes on hurriedly, "I was no mate for the

likes of him, and I knew all along a grand gentleman such as him must soon tire of a poor ignorant girl like me. I was just a whim in his head—he fancied my face. I ought to have knowed. Well, miss," she breaks off suddenly, "I'm keeping you all this time, and I haven't told you yet what I'm here for. I want you to know how it came about. Four years ago he came down south in his yacht, and I saw him on the beach, and he spoke to me once or twice and asked me to go off with him; but I was a proud girl and it angered me when he made so free, and I wouldn't have nothing more to say to him. But when he was gone, I couldn't forget his handsome face—we didn't often set eyes on a gentleman in our parts.

"The next time I saw him was quite sudden. It was a wild stormy night, and a lot of us went down on the beach, looking out after a ship as was coming to pieces on the rocks. There was several of our men made a line with ropes, and swam out to the wreck to try and get some of the poor fellows safe to land; and I'd seen it so often before that I thought nothing of it until I see *him* amongst 'em, ready to take his turn. I gave a little screech; it turned my heart sick with fright; and afterward when they pulled him in all white and death-like, with the blood ozzing from his forehead, I felt half mad like. They took him to father's cottage, which was handy to the shore; and there I nursed him day and night, and tended him like a babe till he was well. Sometimes in the fever when he raved I thought he was dying, and it nigh broke my heart, for from that night they brought him in to us I knew I loved him more than I'd ever done anything in the world before."

I am leaning my face in my hands, with eyes fixed upon her.

"Go on," I say, in a dry, husky voice.

"When he was getting better he seemed to grow fond of me, and called me his dear little nurse, and said he would have died but for me. And then he told as I musn't ever leave him any more. But I knew the love of a great gentleman wasn't no good to a poor girl like me, and I beseeched him to go away and leave me. Well, he did go away for a day or two, and then he came back and asked me to marry him; and I was so overjoyed, I said 'Yes' glad enough. But when he was gone again I knew it was all wrong, and that I wasn't fit for him, and should only be a drag upon him, so that when the whim for me was gone out of him, he'd come to curse and hate me. And I talked it over with father, and he saw it like I did; for he's a proud man, is father, though he only comes o' poor fishing folk. So him and I we settled it that I should go straight away off to my aunt, some miles further up the coast, and he shouldn't know what had become of me; and I went, though it nigh broke my heart. But he went to father and swore he must and would have me; and after a time father gave in, and told him where I was. Poor old man, he thought it was a fine thing to have his Nan made a lady of. I might ha' forgot *him* if he'd kept away, for I worked hard all the day to keep my thoughts off him; but when he came after me there to aunt's, and seemed so fond and earnest, I couldn't hold out no longer—so I let him marry me."

There is a long pause again, while she looks at me with fixed eyes, in which the tears seem to glitter. Mine are ready to catch the infection.

"Well?" I say, more gently this time.

"He tired of me in a month," she says, turning her eyes away quickly—"it couldn't help but be so—me having nothing to give him but my poor love, and that wasn't much account to him when he wearied of me. And then he went away and left me, and every time he came back it was for shorter and shorter, and every time he went away it was for longer and longer, and I fretted and fretted till the trouble seemed a'most too hard to bear. Father soon came to see how it was, and he says to me:

"'You're his lawful wife, and where he goes you has a right to go. So next time he leaves you, you say as you'll follow after him.'

"And when he came the next time I telled him so, an' I shall never forget how he looked at me, or the bitter words he spoke. He said I had enticed him into marrying me, and he cursed the day he ever set eyes on my poor fool's face—that if I wanted to ruin his life forever, and drag him down, I had only to show myself to his friends, and tell them what a fool I had made of him. I was too proud for that, and though I fretted myself to the bone at losing him, I never asked him to let me go with him any more. And when my child came all my love got wrapped up in her, and after that it didn't seem so hard to bear."

The great tears are rolling down her face, her chest heaves. My heart grows soft with pity—I stretch out an eager hand across the table to her.

"I am very sorry for you," I say—for cannot I feel in my heart the anguish of losing him, even though he is proved unworthy of such great love?

"I've nearly done now, miss. Just ten days since I had a letter from an old gypsy woman as we'd been good to once when she was took ill in our parts. She knew all about my being married, and wrote to say as my husband was going to marry a young lady near his own home; and I was to come up at once to stop it, or it 'ud be too late. I hadn't seen him for a year, and at last I was half minded to leave him be and say nothing. I knew he wouldn't ever care no more for me, and I'd grown used to my life without him; and so it came over me to let him be happy with a lady as was fit for him. And then, miss, I thought of you—yes, more a good deal than of myself—for they telled me you was young and pretty and gentle, and I thought to myself how some day it must all come out, and how bitter it would be to you to have your life spoiled like mine—ay, and worse than mine. So I traveled night and day and got here just in the morning, time to stop the marriage."

A groan escapes me at the remembrance.

"Oh, miss," she says, ever so sorrowfully, in her sweet voice, "I do grieve for you—I know how bitter it must ha' been to you—I ha' thought o' you many the time these few days."

"Have you?" I answer; all my anger against her has died out.

"I shall never see *him* no more. I wouldn't look in his face

and see the rage and hate there like it was that morning, not for anything in all the world!" and she shudders. "Fare you well, miss. I'm glad I've seen you, and telled you all this—my mind's easier for it somehow. I don't think you'll feel bitter to me any more now."

"No—never," I say.

And so this strange interview comes to an end.

After this I give up all thoughts of Wilfred—that is, all hope of ever being anything more to him or he to me. I feel no indignation against him; accuse him neither of selfishness nor cruelty. If he sinned toward me, it was because he loved me so, If a thousand women had come to me bringing the story of the wrongs he had inflicted on them, I don't think it would have killed my love for him, but only made the barrier between us so much the more impassable. It did not seem any crime to me that he should love passionately and weary quickly—a nature such as his must perforce be hard to satisfy.

The days go on, but time brings no healing in its wings. My family grow even more cold to me, and I have to bear many a harsh word and taunt from my sisters. Jack never comes—I have only seen him once since that terrible night, and then he was on horseback at the gate speaking to papa, and I knew it was on my account he refused to come in. How bitterly I long after the old times when he used to love me so dearly—when he always took my part and stood by me right or wrong, and I felt sure of a refuge in his great loving heart. I think me of the times when we used to talk over the future, of how I should keep house for him—times never to come any more now.

One morning when I am alone in the drawing-room, I hear a step pass the window, and, looking up, see Mr. Carruthers.

"May I come in?" he says, putting his head in at the open window; and I answer "Yes," gladly enough.

It is something now to see a face looking kindly at me.

After we have shaken hands there is an embarrassed pause. He fidgets about a little, and then says, staring straight at me:

"You're not looking well, and how did you get that mark on your face?"

"I fell against a bench and cut it open," I say, flushing crimson at the recollection.

"Ah!" he says, screwing his mouth up, as if he himself felt the pain of it.

"Does it hurt?" he asks tenderly.

"No—not now. I dare say it doesn't improve my appearance" (with a faint attempt at a smile).

After this, Mr. Carruthers sits for a long time ruminating, his arms resting on his knees, and apparently bent on polishing his left thumb nail. I, sitting listless, make no attempt to continue the conversation.

Suddenly he raises his honest blue eyes to my face.

"I'm not clever at expressing myself," he says. "I feel rather like a bull in a china shop with you always; but I want to tell you" (coming a little nearer) "how awfully cut up I've been about you. I—I wish you'd let me do something for you.

Isn't there something you could think of? I want to be a brother to you, just as if——" and then comes a long pause.

"You are very good," I answer gently; "but I don't think any one could do anything for me. I don't hope to be happy any more in my life. I suppose some people are born to be unhappy and unfortunate."

"Nonsense!" he says sharply; "it's absurd to hear a child like you talk in that way. What are you?—eighteen, and never going to be happy again! Pshaw!" and he laughs a short, impatient laugh."

I sit silent. It does not seem worth while arguing about a thing that is a certainty to me, and not a mere matter of speculation.

"Won't you let me come and take you out a drive sometimes, as I used?" he asks presently.

"You'd best have nothing to do with me," I answer wearily. "It seems I have disgraced every one, and am only fit to be held up as a mark for general scorn and contempt."

The red blood flushes to his brow. I can see how bitterly my words pain him.

"Who says so?" he cries, indignantly; and then, without pausing, "I don't care though all the world said so, I shall never believe you anything but what is pure and true and good. Am I wrong in having such faith?"

His voice is intensely, pasionately eager.

"There!" I exclaim, with a forced, bitter laugh, "you see you doubt me, even in the midst of all your professions."

At this moment the door opens, and two of my sisters come in, so there is no more conversation between us.

After this he comes frequently, but I avoid, if possible, seeing him alone. I cannot but be grateful for his goodness. He continues to send me flowers and fruit—sometimes books; and songs by the score.

One day papa summons me to his room, and I obey in fear and trembling, wondering what new misfortune Fate is going to empty on me from her full quiver.

---

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### A CONGRATULATION.

"Then she took up the burden of life again,
Saying only, 'It might have been.'
But of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"

"SIT down, Doris," says papa, coldly. "I have something to say to you."

I seat myself, not in any way reassured.

"I have never said anything to you about the unhappy events of a few weeks ago," he utters, sternly, "because I could not trust myself sufficiently—and—and whatever your imprudence may have been, we know" (his voice growing softer) "that you have suffered a great deal. Still I feel now there must be a little plain speaking. Your mad imprudence has given occasion to

ill-natured people to say very injurious things about you—so much so that not only your own prospects, but your sisters', are likely to be seriously affected."

I sit silent and trembling, wondering what this is a prelude to.

"What I have to say is this," continues papa, rising and walking nervously to and fro. "Mr. Carruthers is constantly here—it is possible that, in spite of all which has happened, he may still be willing to marry you—and" (speaking very quickly) "if it should be so, it is your bounden duty to your family, after the scandal you have brought upon them, to accept him, whatever your own private feelings may be. Do you hear me?"

"Yes," with a little shiver.

"I may be wrong altogether," pursues papa. "Mr. Carruthers may have utterly abandoned all thought of you, except the desire to pay you attention from the natural kindness of his heart; but if he ever again should ask you to marry him, and you are mad enough to refuse him, my house will cease to be your home. You understand me?"

"Yes," I falter, and hie me away to my room, with a secret, miserable wonder what I have done to deserve the relentless Nemesis that pursues me.

* * * * * * *

It is the middle of September—my life is growing more unendurable day by day. I begin to think anything would be better than the cold harshness which is visited upon me. It may be that feeling so sore and bitter at heart, and knowing the need of sympathy so keenly, I am over-sensitive, and fancy unkindness where it is scarcely meant.

They have ceased to watch me now, and I come and go as of old.

One afternoon I resolve to walk into the woods. I have never been there since that night, which I cannot think of now without a shudder. A somber fancy takes me to revisit the haunts where I have been so happy and so miserable, and I wend my way across the red-plowed fields, to indulge my bitter memories unobserved.

The hours creep on; I have sat by the steel-blue water pool in the green hollow, have wandered through the tall ferns to our trysting-oak, have climbed to the ridge of hill shadowed by thick-leaved beeches, sacred to the memory of that last bitter meeting, and am descending the steep path, hedged by a tangle of blackberries and hazel-bushes, when I come suddenly upon Mr. Carruthers, gun in hand.

"Is it really you, Miss Doris?" he says, looking very glad, as he puts out a brown sunburnt hand for mine.

I, too, should be glad to see his kind, frank face, if it was not for the haunting thought of that interview with papa.

He looks keenly in my face, still holding my hand.

"Are you ill?" he asks anxiously; "you look so white and wan. I think you must want change of air."

"It doesn't much matter," I say, wearily.

"But it does matter. We shall have you slipping through our fingers if we don't look after you."

"Do you think so?" I cry eagerly. "I wish I could. I should be so glad to think I was going to be free of this miserable world soon!"

"Hush!" he says, gravely; "don't talk like that."

"I mean it," I say, dismally, "as seriously as I ever meant anything in my life."

"What! Are you still so unhappy?"

"Unhappy!" I echo wearily, leaning against the trunk of a tree, and looking away out beyond the hazel-bushes—"unhappy! Oh! that word isn't near vast or deep enough for the wretchedness I feel. How should it be otherwise? I've lost all I care for, and every one is cruel to me."

"Cruel to you!" he echoes.

"I am a disgrace and a burden to them, and I shall be all my life; so wouldn't it be a good thing for me to die, and leave off troubling them and being miserable myself?" I ask.

Mr. Carruthers puts his gun down against the tree, and coming close up to me, takes both my hands in his. The frank honest eyes look very eager as he says:

"There is some one you would never be a disgrace or burden to, or anything else but the greatest blessing in the world. Miss Doris, won't you let me try to make you happy? If you will only consent to be my wife, there is nothing I won't do to try and bring the smiles back into your face. I'll take you away from all these scenes that make you miserable, and I'll answer no one shall ever speak a harsh word to you again."

I don't turn away, nor take my hands from his, but look steadfastly in his face.

"I wonder why you care so much for me," I say. "I am not pretty, nor clever, nor very amiable either."

"You are in my eyes," he answers quickly, "and if you are not, it's all the same, I love you. It's my fate, perhaps; I can't help myself; but no woman was ever to me before what you are, nor ever will be again. Do what I may, I *can't* forget you, and Heaven knows I've tried hard enough."

"Are you willing to take me, disgraced as I am?"

"Who says you are disgraced?" he asks sharply. "I don't think you know what pain it gives me to hear that word from your lips. Tell me" (beseechingly), "how came it that you were out with him all those hours?"

"I went to say good-bye to him."

"And—and—forgive me—no, I won't ask you," he says resolutely, turning away. "I know whatever you did was innocent and pure. Yes; I'm content to take you as you are."

"And are you content to have me, knowing that I have no heart to give you; that I can't even make the poorest pretense of loving you?"

I can see how my words wound him, but I feel it a kind of stern duty to say them.

He pauses a moment, and then answers, looking in my face with kind, eager eyes:

"How can I say I am content, when I long so intensely for your love? But I would rather have you on the terms you offer than any other woman whose love was free to me. To have you mine, no matter how, seems almost too much happiness."

"Very well," I say, quietly, "then it shall be as you wish. Only remember that you take me with your eyes open; and if some day you are disappointed that I feel so little for you, you will have no right to blame me.'

For answer he kisses both my hands. It is very good of him to spare me any warmer demonstration of his joy. I don't think I could bear it just now.

He walks with me nearly to the farm, and then I turn to bid him good-bye.

"May I not come any further?" he pleads.

"No, not to-night?"

"To-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow."

"May I bring the phaeton, and drive you out?"

"Yes, thanks, I shall like it very much."

"Good-bye, my darling—I am so happy!"

"Are you?" I ask, blankly, wondering how he can be happy, seeing how miserably cold and indifferent I am.

"Try and like me a little, won't you?" he whispers.

"Yes," I answer, mechanically. "Good-bye."

"*A demain!*" he calls out, cheerily. vaulting the gate, and beaming a glad smile upon me out of his blue eyes.

I walk slowly across the road, and into papa's room. He is writing, and gives just a glance up as I enter.

"I have done as you desired me," I say, in a cold, quiet voice.

"Eh, what?—what do you mean?" he asks.

"I am going to marry Mr. Carruthers."

"My dear child," cries papa, jumping up and coming toward me. "This is good news; I congratulate you."

"You need not," I answer, recoiling, "it is no happiness to me. I have been forced into it."

Then I turn slowly, and go away up-stairs to my bedroom. But when I get there, a sense of shame and self-reproach steals over me, for having spoken so to my father; after all, it is my good he seeks, though he does not understand how bitter it is to me to marry one man, loving another. From that day I have no more sharp words or cold looks at home; it almost angers me to be treated with so much consideration. When I was in need of their tenderest sympathy, they could be hard and unfeeling; now, only because I am to be the wife of a great man. I am overloaded with attentions and affections. I don't blame papa and mamma; they are naturally anxious for my future, but I do feel bitter toward my sisters. Not for long though—happily mine is not a disposition to harbor resentment, and after a time I can accept their marks of affection, and promise them all they ask for the future with a good grace.

As for Mr. Carruthers, he is too good to me. I think he must spend all his time in considering what presents he can make me, and how he can invent some new distraction for me. He teaches

me to ride, drives me out every day in his phaeton, or on his drag, and we are always lunching or dining up at the park. I am to have a pair of ponies like Lady Cecil's—or handsomer, if they are to be got. He insists on my devising new furniture and hangings for the rooms that are to be mine; and as for diamond rings and lockets, fans and smelling-bottles, and every knick-knack ever invented for lovers' presents, he brings me enough to stock a small shop.

One day, when he is showing me the diamonds he means to have re-set for me, I cannot help saying:

"How good you are to me! I shall never be able to repay you."

"Yes, you will a great deal more than repay me," he whispered, "when you begin to love me." And stooping down he kisses my lips.

For all the diamonds in creation I could not have helped snatching myself away.

"You know what I told you!" I cry, almost passionately. "You must not expect what I can't give," and he turns away, bitterly disappointed.

---

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### HUMAN PERVERSITY.

"Oh! hard it is that fondness to sustain,
And struggle not to feel averse in vain;
But harder still the heart's recoil to bear,
And hide from one—perhaps another there.
He takes the hand I give not nor withhold,
Its pulse nor checked nor quickened, calmly cold;
And, when resigned, it drops a lifeless weight
From one I never loved enough to hate."

THE wedding is to take place in November. Mr. Carruthers would have it earlier, but I utterly refuse to consent. As it is, the haste seems to me indecent. Only four months from the time I was to have stood at the altar with one brother, I am to be the bride of the other. Sometimes it occurs to me to wonder what people think of my second engagement, and whether they look upon me as some heartless, unnatural wretch, devoid of those better feelings that govern poor humanity for the most part. Happily my intended marriage with Wilfred had been kept so very quiet, that it was not likely to be known or discussed beyond just the immediate neighborhood. Scarcely any of Mr. Carruthers' friends were aware of it.

This time the wedding is to be a grand one—is to take place in Colton Cathedral, in the presence of the bridegroom's friends. Lord Levinge is to be the best man, and Mr. Carruthers, usually so indifferent on the subject of dress, has requested that my attire may be as elegant and costly as possible. Some people may think that under the circumstances a quiet wedding would be in better taste. But I fully understand and appreciate the motives which actuate Mr. Carruthers in his desire for pomp and parade. It is to honor me—that every one may see how much I am to him, and how proud he is to have me for his

wife. I feel grateful to him for his generous kindness, and am glad to yield to any wish he expresses in the matter.

And since I am to be his wife, I mind little whether the ceremony is to be grand or simple, celebrated in a cathedral or a wayside chapel. So I thought when I was going to marry Wilfred, but, ah! me, how different were the feelings that actuated the thought.

My sisters are in a state of perpetual turmoil and delighted excitement. I envy them bitterly sometimes; but then *they* think *I* ought to be the happiest creature in the world.

A fortnight before my wedding-day, Hepzibah brings a letter to my room.

When I see the writing I tremble very much, I am fain to hide my face from her keen scrutiny.

When she is gone I turn it over in my fingers, feeling as though I dared not break the seal. It seems almost a crime to the man I am going to marry to read it, but then I muttered to myself:

"Who knows, perhaps he has made up his mind to it, and bids me forget him and be happy."

With a sudden effort I open it and read:

"Doris, is it true what they tell me, that your are going to marry Vivian? Was your love for me such a poor, weak thing, that in this little time you have lost all memory of what we were to each other in those days of supreme happiness? What of your vow never to love again—to live all your life on the remembrance of your love for me—to be Doris Keane until you died? That was not four months ago, and now they tell me that in a few days you are to marry him. I won't talk to you of what my life has been since I parted from you. I don't want to excite false sympathy in your breast, if it is indeed true that you have so utterly forgotten. If you loved me as I believed, there would be no need for me to tell you how I waited day by day, hoping against hope for just one word from you; and if you did not, it would be more useless still, since you would not understand. I cannot realize it until I hear from yourself, that by your own act you are going utterly to cut off all hope of our ever being anything more to each other.

"You owe it me, at least, to tell me—and I shall wait to get my sentence from your hand. Oh! child, I think I could bear it better if I knew this marriage was forced upon you, was hateful to you—but——

"I must break off here—I dare not say any more.

"Yours until I die,

"WILFRED."

I sat staring blankly at the paper; all the old memories I have been trying so hard to drown lately rushing in a flood over me. A wild thought of running away from home, and so escaping this marriage, crosses my brain, but only to be thrust aside as hopeless. No, I cannot so basely treat a man who loves and respects me, and I dare not inflict such an injury on my family, who by their own showing have suffered so much through me al-

ready. Why could Wilfred not have left me in peace? It is very cruel in him to stir up all these painful remembrances that I have been trying so hard to bury in oblivion.

"*You* look cheerful, Mrs. Carruthers!" remarks Harry, satirically, at breakfast, and I color angrily, and bend down over my plate.

"I know I shouldn't look so glum if I'd got all the fine things I saw lying out on the bed last night," pursues my brother.

"Hold you tongue, sir!" says papa; "it's time you were off to school."

"I say, there is going to be such a set-out on the day," continues Harry, regardless; "they're going to roast droves of oxen, and everybody's to have unlimited swipes."

I am just in that humor when I cannot bear any allusion of the sort, and get up quickly from the table, not stopping to pick up the chair which in my haste I have overturned.

All that morning I spend in writing to Wilfred. I pen a whole budget, describing what my life has been since we parted, and the reasons that have induced me to consent to marrying his brother. When it is written and sealed, I am in hot haste to get it posted—I can't bear the thought of even a day's delay; but I must post it with my own hands, and in the Colton post-office too, for I dare not trust it at the village shop, which is the usual repository for our letters. But to-day I am going to ride with Mr. Carruthers, and if I were to insist on dismounting to post my letter, his suspicions would of course be aroused.

All day, after my epistle is written, I have serious misgivings as to the wisdom of sending it; by night I resolve not to let it go. I destroy it and write a shorter one, but that shares the same fate. The next morning I pen another, and this time feel satisfied that I have done what is right, though it is very different from the one my first impulse prompted me to write.

After dinner I start to walk into Colton on my errand; my sisters offer to bear me company, but do not press it when I decline, thinking probably that I am going to meet Mr. Carruthers. I have gone a mile on the road, carrying my precious missive for fear of losing it, when I see my husband that is to be coming toward me on horseback, and with a vexed feeling I cram the letter into my pocket.

"What, out alone, Doris!" he says, coming up to me and speaking with a little air of proprietorship that chafes me. "Why, how is that, darling?"

"I wanted to be alone," I answer; "it's a change now and then" (hoping he will take the hint.)

"Where are you off to?"

"Colton."

"But I don't like your being seen alone there, dear—it doesn't look well; and there are always a lot of those fellows loafing about." (Those fellows mean the officers.) "I shall go back with you if you must go, and let Elsleigh wait for me."

"No, don't," I say hurriedly, putting on my best smile; "I don't suppose 'those fellows' will look at me; and if they do I sha'n't see it."

"Why, what do you want to do when you get there?" he asks, rather discontentedly. "Something very important?"

"Oh! no—not at all," I answer. "But it's absurd about my not going alone. I used to do all the errands of the family at one time, and no one ever thought of objecting to my walking in by myself.

His brow contracts a little.

"It's different, you know, now, dear; and, besides, it never ought to have been allowed. At all events, if you are bent on going, I shall go too."

"Then you will force me to go back," I say, rather sulkily.

"I'll tell you what, darling—I dare say your business will wait an hour—I'll get rid of Elsleigh, and bring the phaeton round to drive you in."

"It won't wait," I say desperately—"I want to catch the post."

"Oh!" he exclaims, laughing, "some little millinery business, I suppose, and of course that won't wait."

He has dismounted, and is leading his horse slowly alongside me in the direction of Colton.

"Beg pardon, your honor," says a voice behind, "but I think the lady dropped this," and I look up and see my letter in Mr. Carruthers' hand. I clutch at my dress—there is a slit in the lining, through which it has dropped.

His eye naturally falls on the direction, he gives a start, and the color rushes into his face. Then he looks at me standing guilty, covered with confusion.

"Doris!" he stammers, "what does this mean?"

I snatch it from his hand as he stands staring blankly at me.

"Had I known you were still corresponding with my brother," he says, with proud coldness, after a pause, "I would have released you from your engagement to me long ago."

I am overcome with sudden fear of him, of my family, of my future, if he breaks with me now.

"I have done nothing wrong," I say, trembling; "this is the first time I have ever written to him since—since the day when we were to have been married."

Mr. Carruthers gnaws his mustache angrily at the allusion.

"There, take it and read it if you choose," I say, desperately, holding it toward him.

"No," he answers, pushing my hand away; and then, as if the temptation is too great, he snatches it from me, and breaks the seal. The contents are only these few words:

"It is quite true that I am going to marry your brother. He is very good to me, and I shall try and do my duty to him."

A look of great relief comes into his face.

"Forgive me for doubting you," he says, giving it back to me; but I tear it angrily to shreds, and scatter them to the winds.

I forgot the horse, which gives a violent plunge as the white pieces fly in front of his nose. However, I am not sorry for a little distraction.

"Why did you write that?" Mr. Carruthers asked presently; "have you had a letter from him?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Yesterday."

A black, ugly, furious look darkens his face.

"By ——, it's too bad!" he utters, in a low, concentrated voice. "Well" (after a pause, coldly), "perhaps, as it will cost you such an effort to do your duty to me, I had better relinquish all claim upon you. I have no desire for the *metier* of tyrant to your shrinking slave."

I have never seen him so angry, and feel a greater respect for him. I am a coward. I dare not face the future that awaits me if he gives me up; so I say, piteously, "Please don't be unkind to me."

He softens at once.

"I would not be unkind to you, child, for all the world, but you must think all this is awfully trying to me. If you hate me, I had better by half give you up at once than ruin both our lives."

"But I do not hate you," I reply, in a low voice.

"Don't you, darling?" he utters, tenderly, propitiated at once. "But that's not much. Do you think you will ever love me?"

"I will try," I answer, faintly, like the miserable coward that I am.

Ah! I see I am not made of that noble stuff of which heroines are molded. My resolves are grand enough, but when it comes to the point I dare not brave my family and go out alone into the world.

He looks round to see there is no one coming—what would I give even for the sight of the most miserable tramp!—then he seizes me and kisses me there in the middle of the road.

"You *shall* love me," he says, passionately. "And now come back with me, and promise me not to answer that letter at all."

"I can't," I say.

"Well, then, only say it is true you are going to marry me. Don't give him the *triumph*" (with bitter emphasis) "of feeling you are only going to do your *duty* by me. Will you promise me so much?"

"Yes."

"Thank you, my darling. I shall come round and take you out to-night. You'll go home now, won't you?"

"Yes."

I smile and he smiles, waving a kiss to me as he turns homeward.

"Why on earth can't I be in love with him?" I mutter, half aloud, seeing him ride off looking so handsome on his superb bay horse. "If I could only be fond of him I should be the happiest woman in the world, instead of——"

But I break off without finishing my sentence.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### VIVIAN UNDERSTANDS AT LAST.

"But ever and anon of grief subdued,
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside forever—it may be a sound—
A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring—
A flower—the wind—the ocean which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound:
And how and why we know not."

IT is the morning of my second wedding-day. A dull November sky, murky with gray masses of cloud, looms overhead, and a general sense of chilly discomfort hangs about the air. I am quite composed to-day; there is none of that anxious, nervous restlessness which possessed me on that morning four months ago, when the same ceremonial lay before me. I can sit quite still to have my hair braided, and stand with infinite patience whilst they deck me out in my costly bridal array. A feeling of weariness and gloom pervades me, which I find it impossible to shake off, try how hard I may.

"You ought to be the happiest creature in the world," I say to myself. "You are going to marry a man who loves you with all his heart, a man handsome, rich, kind, who will heap every luxury about you," but somehow the spur is not sharp enough to goad my flagging spirits, and I am still oppressed with a feeling of lonely wretchedness.

I forbid myself all thought of Wilfred. I won't admit one traitorous thought to Mr. Carruthers—now that I am to be his wife, I will, I *will* forget that I ever loved his brother.

The same ceremony of dressing goes on as that last time, only my sisters have not so much leisure to spare from their own toilets to-day, as there will be no lack of spectators to witness their grandeur. However, they come in to give a finishing touch after my new maid has arrayed me, and pronounce me beautiful. I stand for a moment to contemplate myself in the cheval glass, and see there a small slight figure hung with long graceful folds of lustrous satin, a white face with large sorrowful eyes glancing through a film of costly lace, and a glitter of diamonds that I wear sorely against my will, to please him.

I try to wreathe my face with smiles. It is unfair and ungrateful to him to look miserable on my marriage-day, when he has been so good, so generous to me. The attempt terminates in a sickly grin, and, such as it is, it must do duty for the glad blushing smiles that become a happy bride.

It is not the old Colton fly with its wedding-pair that takes papa and I to this wedding; we have an elegant carriage, with a dashing pair of bays.

Mr. Carruthers has taken care that nothing shall be forgotten to do me honor. Jack helps me in with grave politeness. How

I miss that hearty kindness and good-will with which he bade us let by-gones be by-gones that last time!

"Jack," I whisper, piteously, "have you nothing to say to me to-day—no good wish for me?"

"I hope you will be happy," he answers, with cold courtesy, as he might have spoken to an utter stranger.

"Jack!" my lips are trembling, my voice sounds husky, but papa jumps in, and there is no time for more.

Papa does not say much on the way. I think he has had an uneasy feeling toward me ever since that evening when I told him of my engagement.

Just as we are rattling over the stones leading into Colton, he says hurriedly:

"I hope, my dear child, that your new life will be a happy one. You must feel that any steps I have taken to induce you to this marriage were taken with a view to your advancement and happiness."

"Oh! yes," I answer, mechanically. "I am quite sure of that."

And then we drive up to the cathedral, and pass through a great crowd assembled to see the wedding. I am quite composed—there is no nervous fluttering at my heart as I walk slowly up the vaulted aisle, lined on either side with eager spectators. In the chancel are assembled a large party of all the great people in the neighborhood.

Mr. Carruthers is an immense favorite, besides holding a leading position, and every one has elected to do him honor by appearing at his wedding. I can see him laughing and talking in whispers, looking rather excited and very happy. He casts a proud, fond glance at me as I come up leaning on papa's arm, and hastens to take his place beside the altar.

There is no delay to-day—the ceremony commences at once, and is performed by a bishop and an uncle of Mr. Carruthers, assisted by two or three more dignitaries of the church. When it is over, my husband lifts my veil, and kisses me heartily. Then we proceed into the vestry, and I sign myself Doris Keane for the last time. Somehow Doris Carruthers does not sound so sweet in my ears as it did once before—ah! well, I must forget all that, since I have just sworn to keep me only unto *him* until death us do part.

The wedding-breakfast takes place in the Colton Assembly-rooms, as our little house is not a tithe big enough for the guests invited. I try to smile and look glad as I sit beside my handsome husband, that my white, wan face may not make too noticeable a contrast to his radiant one. He is pressing my hand fondly under the table, and entreating me to eat. I would if I could, but am obliged at this very outset to break my promise of obedience. My throat seems swelled up, and I can scarcely swallow a morsel.

Then came the speeches, and Mr. Carruthers returns thanks in his quiet, well-bred voice, without a shade of stammering or awkwardness. He says simply that he is the proudest and happiest man in England, and can only hope that he shall prove

himself worthy of the treasure that has been confided to him. What sweet flattery these words would have contained for me if—ah! well, I've made up my mind to bury those old memories now.

Then there are more speeches—every one is very kind, and says complimentary things about me, and after that I go away to take off my bridal attire, and assume the costly traveling dress that is spread out for me up-stairs. When I come down there are more compliments and congratulations, much kissing from my family, and handshaking by the guests. Then my husband gives me his arm, and we descend the broad steps to the carriage-and-four waiting to bear us to the next station beyond Colton. There is no throwing of old shoes, but all the bells are ringing, and the crowd gives us a hearty cheer as we drive off.

"My darling," he whispers, with a fond kiss, when we are clear of the town and curious eyes, "I am so awfully happy—I will do all in my power to be worthy of you."

And I smile a faint response, and abandon my small cold hands to him. A kind of lethargy has fallen upon me, from which I try in vain to rouse myself. When we are in the train, I sit back with closed eyes, feeling the effort to talk insurmountable, and preferring to seem as if I have fallen asleep from sheer weariness. After a few futile attempts to get a little conversation from me, Mr. Carruthers takes to looking out of the window, and I see that there is a cloud on his brow. Well, I suppose it's not very enlivening to a man on his marriage-day to be sitting *tete-a-tete* with a silent, melancholy-looking bride. I feel sorry for him, and yet somehow can't bestir myself to make him less discontented. It is quite dark when we arrive at our destination, and are ushered into the magnificent suit of rooms that have been prepared for our reception.

"It wants an hour and a half to dinner," says Mr. Carruthers. "I think if you don't mind I'll go down-stairs and look about me a little."

"Yes, do," I responded, eagerly; and he goes out.

I sit down quietly by the fire, my maid comes in to ask if I will take my things off, but I dismiss her with:

"I will come presently."

I have sat for some time gazing at the glowing coals when a strange, sudden feeling of awful horror and misery comes across me. I rise softly and blow the candles out; and then, oblivious of all but a sense of utter despair, I bury my face in my hands and sob aloud in my unbearable anguish. All the recollection of that other wedding comes rushing across me, all the memory of what Wilfred might have been to me, in a torrent too great and fierce to stem; and I sob and sob out my misery and despair, forgetful of who may come in and find me in this sore plight. Suddenly I am roused with a great start, by a voice close at my elbow—a voice I know, but that sounds so strained and bitter, I scarcely recognize it.

"Do you hate me so badly as this?" it says; and looking up in terror I see by the fire-light my husband's face, with a look of

such unutterable pain that I am stricken with an agony of self-reproach.

"Oh! no, no!" I gasp out, between my sobs.

"It is my own fault," he says in the same voice, "and I suppose I must bear the consequences. Don't sob in that agonized way. You need not be afraid that I shall trouble you with a love that is so utterly abhorrent to you."

And before I can prevent him he has left the room, and I am standing staring blankly at the fire, filled with the most bitter contrition and self-reproach.

---

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### "I WOULD AND YET WOULD NOT."

"I do repent; but Heaven hath pleased it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me."

JULY has come round again. I have been married eight months. During that time we have traveled abroad, have spent a season in London—now we are home again at Southcote. Am I happy?—am I even contented?—often enough I ask myself that question, and a sigh answers me. I think I might be if my husband loved me as he used. That seems a strange thing to say, when I have spent so much time in bewailing my fate and the odious marriage into which I have been forced; but it is true nevertheless.

Mr. Carruthers is quite altered from what he was a year ago. One would have pronounced it impossible that a frank, impulsive nature such as his should be capable of so great a change; but it is the case, nevertheless, for all that. The bitter tears and tribulation in which he found me on my wedding-day, seem to have worked a complete revulsion of feeling in him—to have brought before him for the first time the real conviction that he was and always would be repulsive to me. And to this day he has never in the least degree overcome that conviction, and shuns being alone with me as much as possible.

He is never happy unless we are in a vortex of dissipation. Now that we are at home, and I would fain have a little quiet, he insists on filling the house with friends. When I say insist, I mean that he expresses his wish so strongly that I never dream of opposing it. I feel, at least, that I owe him that. He is kindness and generosity itself—nothing is good enough for me—my slightest wishes are anticipated, and yet he seems to shrink from the smallest demonstration of affection for me, so that I begin almost to wonder if he cares at all for me. Courtesy, consideration, attention, he gives me—tenderness never—or if sometimes he has relapsed into a little of the old manner, he will get up and go away abruptly, and next time we meet his manner will be quite cold. In some men such behavior would scarcely surprise me; but when I remember how, in the old days, the least word or look from me would bring him back gladly, however bitterly I might have vexed him, it appears utterly incomprehensible. I am piqued by his coldness. I have a new feeling for him that I never should have known while he continued to

lavish the old affection upon me. It gives me a little prick of shame to think it should be possible for me to come off my pedestal of martyrdom, to be forced to own that I am really beginning to care for my husband, and that the old love I once believed undying, is now little more than a memory.

However, he seems bent on playing at cross-purposes, and it is more than probable that our estrangement will be a lasting one, for my pride forbids me to make the first advance, and trifling incidents are constantly occurring to separate us still further.

I have been wonderfully well received by Mr. Carruthers' friends—every one has taken me cordially by the hand, even Lady Elsleigh; but as Lady Flora and Lady Mabel are both about to make good matches, she can afford to forgive me for carrying off the great matrimonial prize of the neighborhood.

Lady Cecil and I are what the world considers bosom friends; that is, we are constantly riding and driving together; sure to be of the same party at all the balls and race-meetings. In our hearts I believe we are both jealous of one another. I can never forget that she was once in love with my husband; sometimes I think with an uneasy feeling that she still cares for him. Her voice is always lower, more subdued in speaking to him, and she tries to keep him at her side as much as possible. I could be almost angry and bitter at times to see how constantly he is with her, how much more he talks to her and seeks her society than he used; and there are times when I have a miserable dread that she is gaining an influence over him, which is sapping up the little love he feels for me. Happily for me, I have learned not to wear my heart on my sleeve; my manner only becomes a little colder when I am hurt and jealous, but that makes him avoid me more than ever. If I could only feel quite sure his love for me is unchanged, that I am as dear to him as I was a year ago, I think I could go to him and confess that I have at last grown to love him. But what if he should say, "It is too late now. I have conquered my love for you. I shall never feel the same again." That thought effectually deters me. And the constraint between us is such that, when little misunderstandings arise, which a word of explanation with most husbands and wives would suffice to set right, we choose rather to suffer in silence than to say that word; and so the breach goes on widening.

One day soon after our return to Southcote I am wandering through the rooms, and presently turn my steps toward the long picture-gallery where the family portraits are hung.

It is a dull, wet morning, and a fancy takes me to have up the housekeeper, and hear if there are not some ancient traditional stories belonging to them, such as are usually connected with the pictures in old houses. Mrs. Freeman has been forty years in the family, so there is every chance of my getting a good deal of gossip out of her.

"I want you to tell me something about the pictures, Mrs. Freeman," I say when she makes her appearance. "I asked Mr. Carruthers, but he said he was not half so well up in them as you."

"Well, ma'am, I had ought to know a something about them," she replies, with her pleasant smile, "for my aunt, as come into the family seventy years ago come December, could have told the whole genology of every member of it that ever lived; and I used to hear her repeat the whole history of them when I was a girl, and I haven't forgot it yet, though I'm an old woman."

So we begin at the beginning. I am regaled with the wonderful exploits of the Carruthers in past centuries, and presently we come to the dark, melancholy-looking picture that always reminds me so much of Wilfred. Mrs. Freeman seems as if she meant to slip over it, but I say, coloring uneasily:

"You are passing one, the very one I am most curious about;" for I remember my husband saying the first time he took me into the gallery, that there was a story which he could not repeat belonging to that picture.

"Well, ma'am," says my informant, hesitating, "I never do say much about that picture, for I've noticed that my master doesn't seem to care about having it mentioned, but of course to you it's different," and she bobs me a courtesy. "That's the one as they used to call the wicked Carruthers. It's reckoned very like Mr. Wilfred," and she gives me a look askance, to see how I bear the mention of the name.

"Yes, I think it is," I remark, calmly.

"It's rather a long story, ma'am."

"The longer the better," I say, plunging into one of the big velvet chairs. "I want something to make the time pass. What was his name, and when did he live?"

"In William and Mary's reign, ma'am; and his name was Rupert."

"Rupert—Rupert Carruthers," I repeat, musingly; "is that a family name?"

"Yes, ma'am—at least, there was a good many Ruperts before him, but there's never been one since. Well, ma'am, he came into the estates very young, did Mr. Rupert (I had the story from my aunt), through his father dying when he was quite a boy, and he was always very masterful, and would have his way. He had no brothers, but there was a young gentleman who was brought up with him, and they were bosom friends, and hardly ever apart until they grew up; and Mr. George Malingbroke—that was the other one's name—took service in foreign parts. After some years he came back to England, bringing with him an Italian lady, as he called his wife, but some folks said he had carried her off from her husband. However, she was the most beautiful creature that ever was seen in these parts—she had hair just like threads of pure gold, and great brown eyes, as clear as a child's; and her skin it was just like thick cream, with a faint pink in the cheeks. I've seen the picture of her when I was a girl, but it was stolen out of the house one night, for the frame of pearls it was set in, I expect."

"What a pity!" I exclaim regretfully, feeling a great desire to see this much-valued beauty. "Was she really so lovely?"

"Ay, indeed, ma'am, if she was like her picture. I think it was

the most beautiful face I ever set eyes on. They used to say she quite turned the heads of every man as came nigh her, and could get them to do anything she chose, whether it was wicked or not. You wouldn't have thought it either, to look at her, for she had those great, honest-looking eyes—but there, there's no trusting appearances. Well, she and Mr. Malingbroke come on a visit here to Mr. Rupert; and it was only just a very, very little time until he fell over head and ears in love with her, and I suppose she with him. But she, being full of cunning, persuaded him to seem quite cool and indifferent to her before her husband, that he mightn't suspect anything; and he, poor man, having such confidence in his friend, and being altogether wrapped up in his lady, never suspected any harm. Well, ma'am, they stopped a long time here, but at last their stay came to an end; and when they were really gone, Mr. Rupert seemed like one possessed. He used to wander up and down the place like an evil spirit for restlessness, and sometimes he would go riding off at night all over the country, and never come back till day dawn. However, one day he got a letter that seemed to make him very thoughtful, and for a whole day he shut himself up and spoke to nobody. The long and short of it was, ma'am, that the letter he got came from Squire Malingbroke, and in it he told him he had been accused of high treason, for some plot he'd been mixed up in—that his life was in danger, and that he was hiding away. He and his lady would be in the woods the night but one following, and he trusted to Mr. Rupert for friendship's sake to find them safe shelter.

"So Mr. Rupert went out to meet them, and whether he and the lady planned it between 'em, I don't know, but he told Mr. Malingbroke as there was only one way in which he could really give him safe hiding—the lady must seem as if she had fled to him from her husband and come to live openly at the house, and then no one 'ud think of looking for him there, and he must be hid away in a little wood-house until some means was found to get them abroad. At first Mr. Malingbroke would hardly give his consent, but a man'll do a great deal when his life's at stake; and then he trusted her and him both. So the real fact was that while he, poor man, was eating his heart out down in the old wood-shed, Mr. Rupert and the lady was leading a fine gay life up at the house, just as happy and blithe as if there'd never been such a person living as poor Mr. George. I don't know rightly how it came about—whether he began to get suspicious or not, but one night he crept up to the house, and this was what he saw. The house was all lighted up and the windows stood open, while the table was covered with wines and fruit, and the lady was sitting at Mr. Rupert's feet with her head on his knees, while he played with the long yellow locks of her hair, and twisted the pearls in and out. All of a sudden she gave a little shriek; he started up, and there was a white, fierce face looking in upon them; and a moment after George Malingbroke springs into the room and dashes Mr. Rupert to the ground. When he gets up, what does he do but summons his people and give Mr. George up for a traitor to the king and queen. And so, poor

gentleman, he was took and executed. Somehow after that Mr. Rupert turned dead against the lady, and sent her out of the house, and wouldn't see or speak to her. And one fearful night, when it thundered and lightened, and the storm raged so that no Christian would have turned a dog out, she came and beat at the door and prayed to be let in; but he forbade any one to open to her. He was holding high feast with a lot of gay ladies and gentlemen, and he opened a window and called out to her some dreadful name, and bade her begone to a place as isn't fit to be mentioned in your hearing, ma'am. And the next morning she was found dead under one of the trees in the park."

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE RACE-BALL.

"You are crueler—you that we love—
Than hatred, hunger, or death.
You have eyes and breasts like a dove,
And you kill men's hearts with a breath."

LONG after Mrs. Freeman has finished her story, and is gone away, I sit looking at the picture of Rupert Carruthers, and tracing in it the likeness to Wilfred. There are the same deep, melancholy eyes, the same beautiful curved lips, shaded by a silky chestnut mustache; and I sit pondering if the two men's natures were as like as their features—if they were both as unscrupulous in the gratification of their passions, as relentlessly cruel when they tired of their loves. I think of how the one betrayed the friend of his whole life, the other would have sacrificed the woman he loved—how the one left the mistress he idolized to perish in the storm, and the other deserted the wife he had been at such pains to woo, and hated her with a bitter hatred. The circumstances were different, but the natures that prompted both the same.

A long time I sit with my eyes fixed on the handsome face of the wicked Carruthers, with an eager, searching gaze. Aroused at last by the sound of footsteps, I start up and see my husband just turning away from the door. I call to him, he does not answer; then I hurry after him. He is already half-way down stairs, and my sister Fanny is coming up. I feel vexed that he should have found me sitting in front of that picture; no doubt he thinks I am dreaming of his brother. But I cannot explain the matter now, and later on, when an opportunity occurs, I do not like to broach the subject.

That same afternoon, when the rain has cleared off, Lady Cecil comes over and insists on our going over to Lofton to dine. I would gladly decline, but when Mr. Carruthers says he consents gladly if I have no other engagement, I am compelled to accept.

"You must drive your ponies over," laughs Lady Cecil, to me, "and we'll have a chariot-race. Sir Marmaduke shall take charge of you, and I'll have your husband to see fair-play."

So Mr. Carruthers orders my ponies, and when they come round I must perforce put up with the wearisome talk of Lady

Cecil's senile lord, while she, triumphant and bewitching, bears off my handsome husband. He is laughing and talking to her, more like his old self than I have seen him this many a day; and I feel wretched, miserable, for I have been resolving to tell him my real thoughts about the picture, and to make some little overtures toward a reconciliation.

I lose all thought of that now, even get to feel very angry when, on arriving at Lofton Park, I find Lady Cecil and Mr. Carruthers have made a *detour*, and don't come in for an hour after us.

I am silent after dinner, and have the unpleasant consciousness that I am looking both stupid and disagreeable. The worst of it is, I feel I have no right to reproach my husband, so, during the drive home, I maintain a sulky silence, and he, after a few vain efforts to get something more than monosyllabic replies out of me, gives up the attempt in despair.

Colton races are just impending. We have a large party staying in the house, and drive over every day. Of course we are all going to the race-ball on the Cup day. Mr. Carruthers has made it a particular request that I shall be more than usually well dressed—entirely in white: and shall wear the family diamonds. I wonder if he thinks of the day, two years ago, when I went to my first ball in poor, cheap white, and he thought that simplicity sweeter by far than Lady Cecil's magnificence. I don't like to remind him of it. I never venture to allude to the time when he loved me so dearly.

After dinner on the Cup day I am very tired. I have been playing hostess for three days, the weather is broiling, and all today old acquaintances have been leaning over the carriage, talking to me, or Mr. Carruthers has brought up fresh ones to introduce. I half hint that I should be glad to dispense with going to the ball, but he looks so really vexed, that I don't venture another word. The race-ball is the great summer reunion of the county notables, and it would, I believe, mortify him extremely to appear there, for the first time after our marriage, without me. He comes in to see me when I am dressed—the only time he has ever paid me such a compliment. I feel that I am looking well—there is a faint color in my cheeks, and excitement has put an unusual brilliancy into my eyes. Perhaps it is a little rustic vanity that makes my costly lace and diamonds look so magnificent in my eyes. I feel a kind of childish vanity at wearing them in Colton, where so many people must remember me in my cotton gown and old straw hat.

I don't think that those who are born to the purple can have half the delight in wearing it that others do who are decked with it in later life.

My husband, coming in softly, stands looking at me while I pose for his inspection, with a little air of pleased triumph I cannot restrain. For a moment I fancy I see the old proud, fond look gleam in his blue eyes; he makes a quick step forward, but whether the presence of my maid, or some after-thought restrains him, I know not, but he only smiles and says—"I con-

gratulate you on your appearance—you are looking charming," and goes away again.

An unreasonable sense of vexation steals across me. I feel quite angry with my maid for being there at all. If he had only taken me in his arms and said, "You darling, you look the dearest thing in the world—I love you," I wouldn't have minded the disarrangement to my magnificent attire a bit.

"Of course he wouldn't," I say to myself, "with that stupid creature standing there like a stock;" but I wonder secretly whether he would have been equally undemonstrative had she been away.

I feel very discontented on my way to the ball, but am obliged to smile and talk to the two women who are with me.

When we arrive at the Assembly Rooms, my drooping spirits revive—the strains of Godfrey's waltzes put new animation into me, and very soon I am threading the delicious maze with Lord Levinge, the best dancer in the room. I suppose it would appear silly—I am afraid to suggest it, but I should so like to waltz with Vivian.

He looks on quite approvingly at the attention I am receiving, though he is not dancing very much himself. Twice, though, I see him waltzing with Lady Cecil, and it chafes me more than I care to confess. Am I always to be jealous of that woman? She and I are standing close together toward the middle of the evening. Suddenly she turns and whispers to me:

"Take care, *ma belle.* Be prepared, and don't look toward the door just yet."

Of course I glance immediately in the direction I am told not, and with a violent start and blush see Wilfred standing there with his eyes fixed upon me.

For a moment my brain seems to swim—my legs tremble under me, and I am obliged to steady myself on my partner's arm. As Wilfred catches my eye he threads his way slowly across the room toward me, whilst I make a futile effort to enter into unconcerned conversation with the man beside me.

"Doris, are you not going to shake hands with your brother?" says a low thrilling voice close at my ear; and Wilfred is standing by me with outstretched hand, and a manner as quietly composed as if he had never been anything more in his life to me than my husband's brother.

I put my hand silently in his, utterly bewildered to know how I ought to act.

"Are you dancing, or can you spare me a few moments?" he asks, still in the same voice; and my partner, a comparative stranger to us, evidently considering Wilfred's claims greater than his, releases my arm and moves aside.

"Why are you here?"

I can find nothing else to say.

He offers me his arm. I do not know whether to accept or refuse it. Will my husband be angry if I take it, or will the world, that is ignorant of our secret, wonder to see me decline it? I just pass my hand lightly through.

"Why am I here?" he answers, in the unconcerned voice

in which he would have answered a similar question from a stranger. "I haven't missed the race-ball until last year for I don't know how long."

"Oh!" I mutter, completely dumfounded by his manner.

"You've been here before, haven't you?" he continues, "last year?—no, hardly last year—you'd scarcely had time then to get into waltzing cue again; it would take a month or two to recover a broken heart, I suppose, and be quite ready to re-commence the slave-market business. It must be two years ago—I think I remember you—a little *ingenue*, with a plain white frock. Ah! lace and diamonds are a vast deal more in accordance with feminine taste than cheap white muslin, even if they cover a broken heart—are they not, *belle sœur?*"

His mocking tone grates inexpressibly upon me. If he had spoken with the old touching pathos it might have brought back some of the feelings he had been wont to excite in me, but now his tone and words half incense, half disgust me.

"I do not know," I answer, coldly.

"Ah! you never were heart-broken, *tant mieux?*" continues the sneering voice. "But tell me, what have you been doing with yourself all these months—traveling abroad? You must have found that a charming change from the retirement of your younger days. And you spent a season in London?—created quite a furore there, I don't doubt. London's a delightful place, isn't it? I've spent some very happy days there" (with a bitter sneer), "especially last winter. That was about the time you were enjoying yourself abroad, you know."

I am silent, from sheer uneasiness and vexation.

"I believe it gives immense zest to the enjoyment of you soft angelic-looking creatures to think that some poor devil is breaking his heart about you," he continues, with a peculiar smile about his lips. "I was wondering, as I stood watching you from the door, what made you look so radiant. It was some moments before I could realize that the bewitching *grande dame* opposite to me was the little white-faced, sad-eyed Doris Keane that had haunted me day and night for many months. Marvelous what changes a year can work in some of us!"

"Yes," I stammer, utterly at a loss what to say.

"Do you think me changed?" he asks, the bitterness in his voice becoming even more accentuated. "All my friends tell me I'm looking as if I'd been boiled up in 'Medea's Cauldron.' *You* are changed, I think—for the better—diamonds are wonderfully improving. I never was an advocate for beauty unadorned myself. But how silent you have grown, and you used to have so much to say."

"I am a little tired," I murmur; "and besides——"

"Besides what? I haven't hit upon a congenial subject, perhaps. I must try and find a better one. How do you like living at Southcote? It's a wonderful change, I suppose, after the old farm, isn't it?"

Does he hate me? Is this a petty way of revenging himself upon me, I wonder? Looking up, I catch my husband's eyes fixed upon me in anger and surprise.

"Have you seen—Mr.—your brother?" I ask hurriedly of Wilfred.

"No, not yet; ah! there he is! Excuse the impulse of brotherly affection;" and quietly dropping my hand from his arm, he crosses the room deliberately to where Vivian is standing.

---

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### A DETHRONED HERO.

"But after all
She left him."
"Why, her heart must have been tough!
How did it end?"
"And was not this enough?
They met, they parted."
"Child, is there no more?
Something within that interval which bore
The stamp of *why* they parted, *how* they met."

In fear and trembling I watch them meet—my husband looking angry, Wilfred perfectly unconcerned. A few words are exchanged between them, and then Mr. Carruthers crosses the room slowly to my side.

"Would you like to go home?" he asks. "I will make your apologies to our guests."

I want to show him that the meeting with Wilfred has not produced any painful impression upon me; it seems to me that if I were to run away directly, my doing so might be misinterpreted.

"No, thanks," I answer, smiling up in his eyes; "I am not at all tired yet; and I have a whole string of dances to get through."

"I think you had better go," he whispers, looking earnestly at me.

"I would rather not, indeed."

"As you choose," he answers very coldly, turning upon his heel.

Wilfred does not come near me again, nor does he dance. I see him talking to Lady Cecil and other old friends, and constantly I catch his eyes riveted upon me. I can see that Mr. Carruthers is deeply annoyed, and long to whisper to him that he need have no fear for me from this unexpected meeting; but no opportunity for such a confidence occurs, and I have the painful consciousness of being misunderstood.

The following day I rise with a severe headache, feeling utterly unfit for my duties as hostess. It is a great relief when my husband proposes to drive the party over to the race-course after lunch, and to leave me quietly at home. When they are gone I betake myself to my own little morning-room overlooking the lawn, and lay my weary head upon the sofa cushions, to court repose. A long time passes; sleep will not be wooed until somehow, when I have given up all hope, I doze off. How long the sleep lasts I do not know; but when I unclose my eyes Wilfred

is sitting beside the couch watching me. I start up terrified, crying:

"Oh, Wilfred! how can you be so imprudent?"

"Imprudent?—why imprudent? Have I no right to be under my brother's roof-tree, *belle chatelaine?* And what more sweet and simply innocent than to watch a sister's slumbers? Do not be uneasy, your attitude was very graceful; you were not sleeping with your mouth wide open, nor breathing stertorously, I assure you."

His tone and manner are just the same as last night—if anything a shade more sneering and bitter.

"How did you get in here?" I falter.

"I've been wandering about, stealing amongst the trees just like some sneaking thief, watching an opportunity to see the woman I loved. Surely after I've submitted to that degradation for your sake, you won't want to turn me out again directly."

"Why did you not come openly and fairly then, instead of exposing me to the danger of seeming to receive you secretly?" I say indignantly.

"Ah, *ma capricieuse!*" he murmurs bitterly; "I might well take my hat after that, and bid you an eternal adieu. I would" (passionately) "if I could persuade myself that this was real, and not a clever piece of acting: it isn't surely possible that the girl who could risk everything to come out and meet me at midnight, should only a year later be playing the part of the most accomplished prude, and reading me a lecture on the impropriety of being in her sitting-room in broad daylight! What are you afraid of? I'm not going to cut the bell-rope and smother you before you can call assistance; nay, you may ring now, and have me shown the door if you think it will materially improve your position with your husband and servants."

"It is very cruel of you to come here at all," I say impetuously; "you must know how painful it is to us to see you, after all that has happened."

"Us!" he sneers; "what sweet pictures of connubial felicity that word conjures up!—one heart, one mind, one soul! You are very happy then, sister Doris—you and your husband? You have overcome that terrible repugnance to him that made all his wealth and possessions of no value in your eyes some eighteen months ago?"

"He is very good to me," I reply resolutely; "and I—I love him."

"Ah!" says Wilred, "your ideas have undergone a transformation since I first saw you—what is it? two years ago? Do you remember the talks we used to have together in the woods? You were sentimentally inclined then—prone to believe in love without the adjuncts of wealth and grandeur—the rose-shaded tumble-down barn was dear to your youthful soul, was it not, my sister? You believed in your simple heart that one love could last a lifetime, and were ready to consecrate all your days to a memory, if the dear object proved unattainable. You would not believe me when I told you how hollow the world was—how faith, and truth, and love were chimeras—pretty pictures born

and buried in the romancer's brain! Who would have thought, then, that you would be able to teach me more of the bitterness and vanity of human hopes than even I knew or suspected?"

His words roused me to indignation.

"What right have you to accuse me?" I cry hotly, "when all the time that you were filling my foolish head with your grand talk you were living and acting a lie yourself? I loved you, it is true; but do you think if I had known from the beginning that you were another woman's husband I should ever have permitted myself to harbor one thought of you? And how did *you* practice truth and faith? By ruining, or trying at least to ruin, the lives of the two weak women who were foolish enough to give up all their hearts to you. You cannot delude me any longer with your story of being inveigled into an unequal marriage by an artful woman. I have seen your wife—yes, it is quite true. I have heard her version of the story, and I believe it. You might as well do her the justice of telling the bare truth, after your cruel desertion of her. Why did you not say that her beauty was irresistible, that you gave the reign to your passion, and that rather than forego your desire, you were willing to make even the tremendous sacrifice of marrying her? I suppose you loved her better even than you professed to love me; for in marrying her you sacrificed yourself—in persuading me to marry you, you would have brought shame upon me. Faith, truth, love!" I cry, waxing bitter at such a taunt from him, "it is you who are unfaithful—it is the very essence of your nature—when you had ruined my life, you would have tired of me and shaken me off without one grain of compunction!"

All the time I am speaking he keeps his eyes fixed on my face.

"Ah," he says slowly, when I relapse into silence, "you have gained a new insight into my character since last year. It is perhaps the easiest way of banishing the memory of a forgotten love to persude oneself that the object is base and unworthy. Why don't you be honest, and tell the truth?" (with bitter anger). "Why don't you say, 'I never really loved you. A foolish fancy told me once that I did, but when my eyes were opened to see the superior advantage of bestowing my affection on your elder brother, I cast all memory of you off like an old glove.' When I met you first," and his voice falls into the old pathetic accents, "I thought you were a sweet, simple little child, with a great loving heart, who some day would expand into a noble woman, capable of a love that would give inestimable happiness to the man happy enough to win it. I thought the little sordid desires and vanities of other women had no part nor lot in you. I said to myself, 'Here at least is one heart pure from covetousness, from selfish ambition,' and I longed for your love as only those whom bitter disappointment has tortured can long. And for the punishment of my folly I found you more utterly heartless than any creature wearing the semblance of a woman that ever yet deceived me."

"Stop," I say rising, "you have no right to speak to me in

this way. Whatever we have been to each other, at least remember that I am now your brother's wife."

"This dignified virtue becomes you well," he retorts scornfully. "But you may rest perfectly easy. I have no designs injurious to the peace of my brother or his *wife*. Oh, child!" he breaks off, with sudden passion, coming near and taking my reluctant hands, "I could forgive you all, if only I had thought your heart was not grown utterly callous and indifferent to me. If you had shown some agitation, had given one little sign that the old memories were not all swept away. When I came into the ball-room, and saw you looking so lovely; the little face I remember pale and wan with grief for me, all flushed and dimpling with happy smiles, I felt half mad. I should have liked to crush and hurt you, to wreak my revenge upon you for all the horrible hours of torture I have suffered for your sake. Do you know, child" (growing more vehement still)—"have you the faintest shadow of an inkling of what my life was when I knew you were really going to be his wife—worse still when you had actually become his?"

I do not love him now, but I cannot help feeling somewhat of the old power of his voice.

"Hush!" I whisper imploringly; "you must not talk so to me indeed."

"What!" he answers harshly, "*I* can afford to suffer these infernal tortures, and yet your ears are too dainty to hear of them. Pshaw! what a fool I am! You have your fine clothes and your stepping horses—what should you care if a poor devil breaks his heart about you!"

"Wilfred!" I cry, passionately, "if you loved me you would not be here now—when you knew that we could never be anything more to each other you would have kept away: you would have a thousand times rather suffered in silence and absence than come to destroy my peace of mind when I was striving to be happy and do my duty. What good can come of dragging up all these miserable memories, when we know that our only happiness lies in forgetting them? You talk of faith and honor, while the very fact of our being in this room together now is the strongest breach of both. If you knew the real meaning of the words you would not be here."

He turns away with a quick, impatient gesture.

"The men who can love and keep away are cold, half-hearted lovers. They don't feel what I *did*—what I *do!*" and he grasps my arm tighter still, and looks into my face with an eagerness that frightens me.

"Wilfred!" I utter, imploringly, "I beseech of you to go! You must not, shall not talk to me in this way. Think if Vivian were to come home now."

"*Parlez de l'ane——!*" he says, quietly, with a glance out of the window.

I looked round terrified, to meet my husband's eyes fixed full upon me; he is just passing the window with Lord Levinge. The guiltiest creature in the world could not start a crimson more painfully than I do. I see the black furious look come

into his eyes that I have never seen but once before. He makes a step toward the window, and then checking himself puts his arm again through Lord Levinge's and passes on.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### DESILLUSIONNEMENT.

"But to smile on
As if I never went aside to groan,
And wear this mask of falsehood even to those
Who are most dear.
Alas! no scorn, or pain, or hate could be
So heavy as that falsehood is to me;
But that I cannot bear more altered faces
Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,
More misery, disappointment, and mistrust."

A SUDDEN fury against Wilfred fills my heart.

"There!" I cry fiercely, tears of hot anger welling up in my eyes, "are you content now?—are you satisfied with your revenge?—do you think you have succeeded thoroughly in making him doubt and hate me?"

"Pshaw!" he answers bitterly. "You have but to go and lay your heart on his breast, and look into his eyes with your soft loving ones, that are capable of cajoling the arch fiend himself, and he will believe, and be only too ready to forgive you. Tell him how you loathe me now you have learnt to love him—how I forced myself upon you; it will be delicious music in his ears."

"It would be quite true," I cry passionately. "I loathe you, and I love him."

He stands for a moment speechless looking at me, and there comes into his eyes a terrible look of concentrated hate and anger.

"Ah!" he mutters, in a long-drawn breath.

And then he comes up close to me, and grasping my arm like a vise, whispers in my ear words too horrible to repeat. I close my eyes with fear—an awful feeling that he is going to murder me darts across my brain; and then I forget everything.

When I become conscious again my husband is bending over me with miserable, anxious eyes.

"Is he gone?" I mutter, looking round the room.

"Yes," answers Vivian, bitterly, "he is gone. And, by——! if he ever sets foot in the place again, he sha'n't leave it scot-free, as he has done to-day. Since *you* won't keep my honor, I shall know how to look after it myself."

"Oh! Vivian," I cry, clinging to him, "don't misunderstand me this time. I swear to you that I knew nothing of his coming—that I no longer feel any love for him."

He tears himself away from me almost roughly.

"I am no Othello," he says, sharply. "You need not tell me lies out of fear. If you have succeeded in making me cease to love you—don't make me learn to hate you!"

And with that he goes away, and leaves me, and I hear him calling impatiently to the men to send my maid.

And though my heart aches and throbs with passionate misery, I am forced to wear a smiling face, to sit at my husband's table, as though I were a happy wife instead of the most miserable, weary creature on the face of the earth. When every one else is quietly in bed, I steal to my window and sit there sobbing out my grief and pain. I wonder if any one else feels so utterly forlorn and forsaken as I who have been loved so dearly. No one cares for me now, no one ever will again. I begin to reproach myself bitterly. What claim have I in my fickleness to an honest man's true love? When Vivian cared for me so dearly, and would have given all he possessed to make me love him, could be cold, captious, and indifferent—could choose to make my life a weariness with fretting after a man who, except for beauty, accomplishments, and a soft voice, was not worthy to tie his shoe-strings; and now, when he has done all I besought him, has left me to myself and ceased to love me, I am fretting my heart out after him.

I break out into a rage against myself; and then I think, smitten with remorse, how I have spoiled and marred his life. He took me from a humble position when he might have married into the best families in the land; he delighted to heap me with honor, with luxury, with everything that the most ambitious woman could desire; and in return for it all, I wounded him to the quick, estranged him utterly, and am no more to him than the woman who bears his name, and sits at the head of his table. I never thought to lose him in this way. I was so confident of his bearing all the coldness, the slights, the caprices I chose to inflict upon him as never once to dream that suddenly his frank, kindly nature might turn and meet my coldness and reserve with equal pride. It seemed to me that a word would always bring him gladly back to my side, however bitterly I might have wounded him; but I had to learn that a nature like his, long-suffering to the last degree, is the hardest to propitiate when once turned. I could beat my head against the iron bars with rage, to think of my lost power over him—to remember how little I am, how much I was to him.

As the days pass, we become colder and colder to each other; there is every sign of outward courtesy in our manner, the world has no occasion to wonder or to look askance; but the breach is gradually and steadily widening, and a horror sometimes creeps over me that he is really growing to hate me. I resolve to myself that when our guests are gone, and we are alone, I will make a violent effort to regain his affection. I will go humbly to him and confess that I have grown to love him, and beg of him some small portion of the great love he once gave me. I care nothing for the humiliation. I am ready to make any sacrifice only to bring some ray of love and happiness into our lives.

But before I have occasion to carry my resolve into execution, I am seized with a wild fit of jealousy against Lady Cecil. There is nothing pointed in his manner to her, I cannot accuse him of paying her undue attention; and yet it seems as if by some chance they are always together, and I notice with bitter

misery that he seems more like his old self in her society. Of her feeling to him I have not a shadow of a doubt. I know well enough why she is always making pretexts for seeing me, and coming over to Southcote, or insisting on our going to Lofton. But my pride will not allow me to appear jealous or suspicious. I acquiesce in all the arrangements they make, smile and try to seem at my ease when all the while my heart aches with apprehension, and I am sick with jealousy. If I dared, I should like to turn furiously upon him with bitter reproaches; but, in spite of my blind anger, I cannot help seeing that such a course would be utterly absurd and unreasonable.

One bright October morning we drive out, Lady Cecil and I, to meet the shooting-party, and take some part of their lunch that has been forgotten. She and Sir Marmaduke are spending a day or two with us, for we frequently exchange visits in spite of being such near neighbors.

I am driving my chestnut ponies; they are going splendidly, and I see with secret delight that Lady Cecil is a little jealous of them. I cannot tell how it is, but I have always a feeling of rivalry with her, and believe she has the same for me. I never care so much about looking well, and being handsomely dressed, as when she is to be of the party; and I cannot help remarking the exquisite care and elegance with which she arrays herself when she comes to Southcote.

"You have wonderful taste in dress," she once said, half superciliously, half discontentedly; and I answered with a touch of pique:

"No doubt I acquired it by studying you."

We come up with the shooting-party about three miles from home. They are preparing for lunch under some trees a little way from the road. My groom has got down to run to them with the hamper as Mr. Carruthers and Lord Elsleigh saunter toward us. Suddenly there is a sharp report from a gun close by, followed in quick succession by two more; the chestnuts rear and begin to plunge furiously, and before my husband, who makes a frantic rush, can get to their heads, they are off like mad things. The worst of it is, they have got on the turf, and the carriage sways to and fro, rolling and bumping over ruts and mounds, with no weight behind to steady it. I have not a great deal of nerve at the best of times, but I manage to sit still and guide them straight, loosening the rein and checking sharply at their mouths every moment to prevent them getting the bits between their teeth. But they only toss their heads and rush on more furiously. My great fear is that Lady Cecil will jump out; she keeps moving to and fro, and uttering little screams.

"Pray sit still! pray sit still!" I cry every moment, speaking thickly, and not daring to take my eyes off the ponies. They don't run a very great way; it happens to be a long, straight piece of turf leading out on a common, and in about half a mile I pull them into a walk, and presently to a standstill.

"Hold them while I stand at their heads, until Mr. Carruthers comes up," I say, offering her the reins.

"Not for the world," she answers, shuddering and gasping.

"Horrid creatures! I hope you will never think of driving them again. I always thought they had a vicious look in their eyes. I don't like chestnuts."

"It was quite sufficient to frighten any horses in the world," I say nettled. "If Adams had been at their heads, they would have stopped quiet enough, it was just a little *contretemps*." And I turn my head to see if any one is coming to our rescue, for the ponies are still fidgety.

Yes, Mr. Carruthers is flying on our track, and a long way after him poor Adams toils frantically—behind him again more stragglers.

Vivian comes up looking very white.

"Thank God you're safe, my darling," he says, in a choked voice, putting his hand on mine, and with the old look of tenderness in his eyes. "You shall never drive those brutes again."

A glad flush rises to my face, but dies away again in a moment as I hear Lady Cecil's voice.

"Vivian—Mr. Carruthers! come and take me out," and then she leans on his shoulder, and indulges in a fit of hysterics. I sit up angry and rigid, while Adams comes rushing up. Lady Cecil is out on the grass, supported by my husband, weeping bitterly.

"Get in behind, Adams!" I say in a quick sharp voice. And as he obeys, I turn the ponies' heads round and prepare to drive back down the road.

"Doris! Doris! what are you thinking of?" shouts my husband. "Stop, I desire you—stop till I can come to you!" But my blood is up; I am in a rage and don't care an atom whether they start off again or not; so, heedless of his imperative voice, of his shout to Adams, who dares not obey him, to take the reins, I start them off at a smart pace down the road we came. I stop when Sir Marmaduke, Lord Elsleigh, and the other men come up.

"Lady Cecil is very much frightened," I say, in a quiet voice to her husband. "Mr. Carruthers is trying to pacify her, but I dare say you will be able to reassure her better."

"I congratulate you on your nerve, Mrs. Carruthers," exclaims Lord Elsleigh; "but hadn't you better get out now? I wouldn't drive them any more to-day—they seem very fidgety still."

"I am going home now at once to send the carriage for Lady Cecil," I reply; "she won't trust herself with me any more," and I make a sign to Adams to jump in.

Lord Levinge puts his foot on the step and gets in beside me.

"If you are such a determined little lady," he says, quietly, "I shall come and see you don't get into any more mischief."

I am not sorry for his company—he and I are great friends, and I would give the world to make my husband jealous at this moment. It is just as well he came too, for the ponies start and shy at everything on the road home, and I am fain at last to relinquish the reins to him, and rest my aching arms in my lap. What with fright, excitement, anger, and the doubt that I have been guilty of a most impolitic action in showing my resentment and disobeying my husband, I am almost ready to cry.

"Don't take any notice of me," I whisper, as I see Lord Levinge's eyes bent curiously upon me, "I am very silly."

"I think you are very plucky," he answers, kindly—"the worst of it is your spirit is too big for your body."

After lunch he prefers remaining with me to going in search of the shooting party, and at his request I seat myself at the piano, and sing a string of my old ballads, while he lounges beside me in an arm-chair. So Lady Cecil and Mr. Carruthers find us when they come in later, and I am very glad of further opportunity of piquing my husband, who does not seem in the best temper in the world.

"How could you be so imprudent, Mrs. Carruthers," cries Lady Cecil, "as to drive those runaway ponies home? We were quite alarmed for you, were we not?" (Turning to Vivian).

"I was not at all uneasy myself, I assure you," I reply, flushing a little, but endeavoring to speak very calmly. "Lord Levinge was good enough to bring me home, and I felt perfectly safe with him."

"I shall sell the brutes," says Mr. Carruthers viciously.

"Indeed, I hope you will do nothing of the kind," I answered quickly. "I should be extremely vexed if you did."

"I don't consider them safe," he says, gnawing his mustache angrily. "Women never know their danger."

"Indeed, I mean to drive them to-morrow," I say, a little of my old fire blazing up in me. "I shall feel every confidence if Lord Levinge will be good enough to go with me."

"If I thought you were really serious," responds my husband, flashing an angry glance upon me, "I would send them off at once, this afternoon."

This is the first time we have ever had the shadow of an altercation, and it makes us both feel better to each other.

That night I hear him pacing up and down for hours in the room next to mine. I wonder, as I listen to the continued tramp of his feet, if it is of me he is thinking—if it is anger and impatience against me that he is venting—or if he still has something of the old love for me.

A sudden impulse comes across me that I will go to him, and beseech him to let all this miserable mist of coldness and distrust be cleared up between us; and springing up, I throw a wrapper round me, and walk bare-footed across the floor to the door. Before I reach it, a jealous thought of Lady Cecil stops me. I cannot forget how she called him Vivian, and leaned sobbing on his shoulder only to-day.

Perhaps he is thinking of her now, and with a bitter, angry feeling toward them both I steal back to bed, and try to forget them in sleep.

## CHAPTER XL.

### A "MEET."

"Those who inflict must suffer; for they see
The work of their own hearts, and that must be
Our chastisement."

ONE November morning I ride to the meet with my husband. Many a time have I longed keenly to go a-hunting, but Mr. Carruthers always puts a resolute veto upon my aspirations.

"Why won't you let me go?—other women do." I have urged petulantly half a score of times; but he only answers, shaking his head:

"The hunting-field is not a fit place for women, and nothing would vex me more than to see you riding to hounds."

If he would only say, "The truth is, darling, I am afraid for you, I should be nervous and uneasy the whole time," I would not mind so much, but he never gives me the only reason that would reconcile me to his refusal.

"I suppose you think I should tumble off," I say resentfully.

"No, I don't," is the answer. "You have a first-rate seat—it is not that at all, but I don't wish you to go."

"Some day, when you are off, and I can't get any one to give me a lead, I shall try a fence or two," I retort, half laughing, half defiant.

An angry flush crosses his face.

"If I thought you meant it——" he begins quickly.

"What?" provokingly.

"Nothing," he says, gnawing his mustache. "I am quite sure, as you know how strongly I feel on the subject, you won't wantonly vex me."

"It is pure selfishness on his part," I say to myself; "he would not like to be troubled with me. Of course when a man is splendidly mounted, well up with the hounds, and in the midst of a great run, it must be an awful nuisance to be hampered with even the woman he loves best in the world; and when his devotion does not amount to that," I add, bitterly, "no wonder he is anxious to leave her at home."

"You need not stop to pick me up if I get a fall," say I, unable to quit the subject; "if you don't look behind, you will be free from all responsibility. Some day when Lord Levinge is out I might go. He wouldn't mind making a sacrifice once in a way, and would pick me out a few easy jumps."

"Doris!" utters my husband, sharply, "if you are jesting, the joke is a very bad one. Anyhow, the subject is one I don't care to pursue. You know my express desire on the subject—I have no more to say."

This morning I do not attempt any argument or entreaty, but being by this time tolerably reconciled to the inevitable, ride tranquilly along on my beautiful black mare to the meet at Atherton Woods, four miles distant. My husband is a splendid rider, sits as if horse and man were one; and the pink is as becoming to him as to most fair, good-looking Englishmen. I am

very proud of him in the well-worn coat and spotless boots that you might see your face in. His get-up is the perfection of neatness—the chestnut's satin coat, saddle, bridles, all are exceptional.

A gray, cold mist hangs about the morning, with now and then a small spitting of rain; but before we get to the woods there are streaks of light in the sky, and a small white spot in the heavens indicates where Phœbus is trying hard to smile through.

We are early, or, rather, the master is late, and Mr. Carruthers insists on my having a canter round the field with my groom, to keep me warm; he does not want to take the freshness out of his own horse. The hounds are waiting, taking gentle exercise up and down with the whips, to keep them quiet; but they don't seem to relish the enforced inertion. Half a dozen men and more boys are lounging about with sticks, ready to begin beating as soon as the master comes up.

Lord Elsleigh, Lord Levinge, Sir Marmaduke and Lady Cecil ride up, half a dozen of the —th from Colton, with several other people that I don't know. Then a Mrs. Temple appears with her groom; a very pretty woman she is, with curly brown hair and great blue eyes; a splendid horsewoman, and possessing the reputation for being the fastest woman in the county. All the men like her; she never lacks a squire—*par consequent* she is not popular with the fairer or the unfairer portion of the community. I like her; she might certainly be a little less *risquee* in her sayings and doings with advantage, but there is no treachery in her.

We are all laughing and talking together. I confess to feeling very much piqued at the thought of being left behind just when the excitement and fun begin.

"You are going to hounds to-day, of course, Mrs. Carruthers," says Lady Cecil, veiling the intended provocation with a soft smile.

"No," I answer curtly. "Mr. Carruthers will not allow me; probably he does not think me sufficiently good at riding to try the experiment."

"It's too bad!" cries Mrs. Temple. "Vivian" (she has known him all her life), "is it true you're such an abominable tyrant?"

"I am afraid in that one respect it is, Nellie," he laughs good-humoredly.

"I should defy you," she says, making a little *moue* at him. "All the husbands in the world wouldn't keep me back when I once heard the hounds giving tongue. Why don't you rebel, Mrs. Carruthers? I'll aid and abet."

"Very well," I say, laughing. "Come, Vivian, let me go this once, and if I get a fall I promise never to worry you any more."

A resolute shake of the head is the only response.

"Come, Vivian, don't be obstinate," laughs Nellie Temple. "If I promise to give her a lead, and go quietly for once! You know I have a capital eye—no one can pick good places better than I. I'll give her a lead."

"And I will ride behind, to pick them both up," said Lord Levinge, with his quiet smile.

Mr. Carruthers turns away looking vexed, and making no answer.

"Very well," says Mrs. Temple, "as I am not allowed to make a sacrifice on the altar of friendship, I mean going to-day. I say, Charlie" (turning to a man who has just come up), "you gave me a lead last time; you can follow me to-day, for I see you'll want some one to take the top rails off, and make a few openings for that great blundering brute you're on."

The gate at the side of the field opens, and in stream a dozen red-coats, the master, and a party from Borough Park. A moment for cheery "good-morning—how are you?" to every one, and then the huntsman, whips, and dogs are off into cover, the beaters scramble on in front, and we ride two and three abreast down the glade, laughing and talking, a pleasant excitement making our pulses beat a thought faster.

It is a sweet, pretty sight; the trees are still well covered with leaves, though it is the third of November, for we have had no frosts to speak of yet; the sun is beginning to throw long slanting rays through the branches on the lush-green grass and trailing bushes—on some two score fine horses, fretting, dancing, showing themselves in a fever of restrained excitement—on the picturesque scarlet coats and manly figures of nearly as many comely, well-looking men—and on three blue-habited Amazons. Down the glade we go at a smart trot, stooping our heads to evade the low-hanging boughs, our horses plashing through the soft wet ground. Presently we come to a round open space, where there is a big water-pool and a great log of felled timber; and here we rein up to listen for the hounds.

"You can manage her, Doris, can't you?" says Vivian, a little bit anxiously, as La Reine tosses her head about, and makes little fidgety starts, unable to control her impatience.

"Of course—she's only a little excited," I answer, smiling, for I am not nervous on horseback.

"You promise to go home the moment they find," he urged, almost imploringly; and I answer:

"Yes, of course, if you wish it."

"God bless you, darling! Good-bye," he says, hurriedly, for at this moment there is a shout from the huntsmen, a clamorous cry from the hounds, and every one is preparing to rush back down the glades, the fox having broken cover.

"Keep close to your mistress!" shouts Vivian to the groom. "Hold her in hand!" to me (no easy task, by the way, with twenty excited horses thundering up behind), and off Vivian dashes up the glade, with Lady Cecil close behind him.

La Reine is pulling my arms off, as mortified as I am to be compelled to this disgraceful inertness, and I feel more than half minded to give her her head, and declare afterward I could not hold her. But Godfrey's hand is close to the bridle; he doesn't mean to get into trouble with his master for his mistress' sake; so I soothe and pat and talk to the mare, and she, tossing her head, fuming, chafing, fretting, throwing back great

flakes of froth all over me, says plainly, "It's too bad to keep me here when I could be up with the best of them."

It was a false alarm, or the fox has gone back to cover. Anyhow, when we emerge from the wood, the dog's are all spread about, there is a good deal of shouting, and everybody is riding to and fro, in a desultory, uncertain manner. Some gallop back into the wood, some ride along the field close to the hedge; the beaters are calling to each other, and dashing their sticks into the crisp leaves. Now a cry of "Forrard!" comes from the huntsman, and La Reine gets furious as her comrades pass her again full tilt. At the end of the field is a hideous steam-threshing machine, which not one horse in ten will pass without giving it a wide circuit. They're off now, surely—but, no, another check—they are coming back.

"We'd better be going, ma'am," said Godfrey, respectfully. "I don't think the mare'll stand all this galloping by her much longer—she giv a nasty kick the last time—and it's enough to try the temper of a hangel, I'm sure, ma'am."

But I am looking jealously at Lady Cecil, who is still side by side with Vivian. They do not come quite up—the horn sounds—they turn again—yes, this time they are really off—there goes Reynard right across that big grass field!—the dogs streaming after him; horses and riders in mad pursuit. With keen chagrin my eyes follow them. From a slight elevation of the ground we see them quite well; some going straight as a dart—some making slight, some wide detours, but all going at a mad pace, filled, as I think, regretfully, with delirious excitement.

How is this?—here is one scarlet coat left behind, only just now emerging at a slow pace from the wood. A tremor seizes me as I recognize Wilfred. Riding quietly up, he takes off his hat with distant politeness—and then, coming nearer, holds out his hand. Godfrey drops behind.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### MY BROTHER.

"You loved, it may be, more than I;
We know not, love is hard to seize.
And all things are not good to try;
And life-long love's the worst of these
For us, Felise."

"You here!" I say, bewildered. "I did not see you before."

"I came with Sir George, but was seized with sudden dizziness. I've been rather subject to it of late, so I thought it better to give up hunting for to-day."

Is he telling the truth?

"You don't ride to hounds, of course," he says, with a polite sneer.

"Why of course?" I ask, coloring with annoyance at his tone.

"A thousand pardons if I have affronted you," he answers, irritating me still more by remarking my vexation.

"As you say, why of course? Only generally when one takes to a thing late——"

"I don't ride to hounds because Vivian does not like it," I say, sharply.

"Ah!" with a little acquiescent bow. "Is his objection one of uxorious solicitude, or because he finds one lady enough on his hands out hunting?"

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing, only that I conclude Sir Marmaduke has devolved his responsibility on Vivian's shoulders, as he has always been Di Cecil's cavalier when I have been out—at least lately. She certainly looks marvelously well on horseback—her figure is so *svelte*, so exquisitely proportioned. As she rode down the glade with Vivian, I could not help thinking of those lines from Tennyson. You know Tennyson, don't you?

"'She looked so lovely as she swayed
The rein with dainty finger tips,
A man had given all other bliss——'

Ah! *pardon*," he breaks off abruptly. "I'm afraid you would not think the quotation very *a propos*."

There is something indescribably insulting in his tone, though his manner is exaggeratedly polite and deferential—it reminds me of the old time, when in his presence I was made to feel an acute sense of inferiority. But there is added the bitterness of hatred now.

"Why should he hate me? and if he does, why cannot he avoid me?" I think. "It is so small, so womanish to wreak a petty revenge by trying to humiliate me."

"I am not jealous of Lady Cecil, if you mean that," I say, haughtily.

"I dare say you have no need to be," he returns, coolly. "It is not because Vivian wanted to marry her once that he should still care for her."

A deeper flush dyes my cheek—he may be only trying to mortify me—if that is his object, he succeeds.

"Wanted to marry her!" I echo, my voice painfully tremulous. "I think you are mistaken."

"*Non pas*," he utters lightly. "It was I who prevented his carrying out the desire. You must know" (speaking in a cool matter-of-fact tone)—"you must know I was in love with her myself once."

"Yes, I know that," is my reply, given with some viciousness.

A shade crosses his face, but he answers carelessly:

"The time I speak of is some years ago now, when you were running wild about the farm, with love quite unfledged in your *innocent* mind. As I said, I was in love with Di, and Vivian was also in her toils. Whether she liked him or me best personally, I cannot say; of course when it was a question between the rich brother and the poor one, I need not tell *you* whom most she to appearance favored; however, I induced him to believe she cared for me, but was willing to take him for his money, so he gave up the idea at once. Then she married her present lord. It must have been awfully disappointing his going to living in this inconsiderate way. I don't wonder at her

liking to have Vivian everywhere about with her, and saint though he is, I dare say forbidden fruit has its temptations even for him."

Bitter tears sprung to my eyes. I cannot choke down the knot that rises in my throat. Impelled by his cruelty I turn upon him like some unhappy goaded animal, crying painfully:

"Why do you hate me so?"

"Hate you, *ma belle?* I!" he utters, with a look of well-bred astonishment. "No, certainly I do not hate you any more than I love you. I did once madly, passionately, as you know: but there are some people of whom we get *desillusionne* all of a sudden."

If he is acting a part, he is indeed an accomplished actor, nothing could be more thoroughly indifferent than his tone. The thrust goes well home—not for his sake, but because I am applying his words to my husband.

Wilfred continues in a clear reasoning voice:

"One expects too much of them; unintentionally perhaps they give one the idea of being something they are not—a mad fancy takes one—if they are unattainable, one is worked into a frenzy, and then some day quite suddenly one's eyes are opened, another is added to the list of *illusions perdus*, and wondering what blindness can have beset one, one spends the rest of one's days in devout thanks to Heaven for the mistake one has been spared."

"You need not try to crush me too utterly," I retort with hot scorn. "I never pretended either to beauty, talents, or accomplishments."

"I suppose men get a kind of glamour thrown over them," he says, musingly. "And in some cases it lasts. No doubt" (with a sneer) "Vivian is as *eperdu* about you now as the day he consented to take you, knowing your heart was given (for the hour) to some one else."

There is strange meaning in his voice. Oh, he cannot surely suspect—cannot know that my power over his brother is gone—cannot have the cruelty to taunt me with it?

"Are you staying here?" I say, changing the subject abruptly.

"Yes—at Borough Park. I have invitations to every house in the county—except my brother's. It is a little odd having the doors of what has always been home shut upon one—don't you think so?"

We are in the road now: a horseman is coming swiftly toward us, riding at full gallop along the uneven grass by the roadside. As he comes up to us he checks his horse sharply. It is my brother Jack, equipped for hunting.

"You will be late, dear," I say eagerly; "they found twenty minutes ago, and went off in the direction of Red Mill."

His brow flushes—he pauses a moment irresolute, then brings his horse the other side of me.

"I should not be likely to catch them up now," he says; "I may as well go home again. Will you come with me to the farm, there is something I want to show you."

His voice is sharp and stern, an angry fire glitters in his eyes, No word of salutation passes between him and Wilfred, who assumes the *de haut en bas* air that is so utterly embarrassing and uncomfortable. Mine is an extremely pleasant position—riding between two fully accoutered Nimrods, whom I am keeping from their pet sport by their anger, not their love, and who are besides at daggers drawn.

"By all means; I want to look over your place," I answer my brother quietly, trying to put the best face on the matter. We all ride on together—the entire onus of conversation resting on me. First I address Jack, then Wilfred. From the former I get sharp curt replies; the latter treats me with the distant exaggerated courtesy that he always uses for his most stinging weapon. We ride on abreast for a mile before we come in sight of Jack's farm. Why does not Wilfred leave us? Surely he might go now—but no, he rides off to the very gate; then at last doffs his hat low, shakes me formally by the hand, and, turning his horse, rides slowly down the road we have come.

Jack dismounts, and without asking my consent lifts me from my horse, throwing the reins to the groom; then, still silent, with lowering brow he precedes me into the same dining-room which once I spent the long morning in arranging Ah, the difference between then and now—when our hearts were so full of loving confidence, our lips brimming over with tender words? I do not feel guilty as I stand beside him, though his glance is so sternly condemnatory—the meeting with Wilfred was none of my seeking, and Heaven knows my heart is free of love for him now!

"Will you take anything?" my brother asks me formally.

"No, thank you, Jack," and then half amused, although I am miserable, at the stern perplexity written on his face, I stand by the table waiting for him to speak. He moves restlessly to and fro; opens and shuts sundry drawers, stirs the fire and exhibits every sign of uneasiness common to the sex when a difficult and delicate task lies before them. Suddenly, as I stand watching him, a gleam of the old great love comes rushing through my heart, my pulses quicken, the knot rises in my throat, I go toward him where he stands by the big old-fashioned chimney-piece.

"Jack!" My eyes are full of tears; I hold two cold ungloved hands toward him.

For a moment he seems to catch the infection, then he makes a great effort—the stern, steely glitter returns to his eyes, and he half pushes me away.

"I know what you think, Jack," I say eagerly, before he has time to speak; "but you are so wrong—so wrong!"

"Then what does your being together alone mean?" he asks, peremptorily. "Why did he stop back from the hunt?"

"I don't know; unless it was to have the pleasure of a little revenge," I say bitterly. "Pray don't imagine any love passages passed between us; he's only opened his lips to say the most galling, mortifying things to me."

"Then since he can still gall and mortify you, I hardly see how you can be indifferent to him."

"It wasn't for his sake I felt sore, Jack," I cry eagerly; "it was because he wanted to hint that—that——"

"That what?"

"I would rather not say" (stammering and blushing uneasily).

"Then how am I to have any faith in you?" asks Jack, making as if to push me from him.

"Jack, you may believe me, I swear!" I cry excitedly. "Bring your Bible here if you choose, and I will swear on it, by the solemnest oath you can dictate, that I have not an atom of love left for Wilfred—that there is only one man in the world I love passionately, devotedly, and that is my husband."

My brother looks at me more than half convinced, yet still a little wavering. As I stand there meeting with a firm gaze his penetrating one, watching the dear honest face, with the flickering blaze playing upon it, the old love comes back, mingled with a deep intense yearning for his sympathy, and with a great surging bitter memory of my husband's apparent indifference. Of a sudden I push him into the great arm-chair, and throw myself on my knees before him.

"Jack!" I cry, with impassioned eagerness, my voice broken by strong emotion, "have you quite forgotten what we used to be to each other?—how you loved me, how you always took my part?—how good and tender you were to me if I had any little childish trouble? Don't you remember any more how I loved you, better than papa, mamma, and all the others—don't you remember, Jack? Oh! dear, dear Jack, do love me once more—let me love you. You don't know how I have suffered from your coldness! And though you may have blamed me bitterly in the past, when I seemed to act madly and foolishly, you might have had some pity in your heart for the agony of my punishment. Oh! Jack, surely you might be true to me; if lovers and husbands grow indifferent, if they disappoint one so bitterly, surely, surely a brother's love might hold steadfast to the end! A brother!—oh! Jack," and a great burst of tears stops my utterance.

The old light has been growing gradually in the dear frank blue eyes during my passionate appeal; and now, when breaking down utterly I bury my face in my hands, he draws me to him, soothing me with the old tenderness.

"Hush! Cissy, hush! dear," he whispers in a shaken voice, "so I will be the same to you again. When you have need of me I won't fail you. There, dear, stop crying. You may trust me." And he kisses my cheeks, my eyes, my forehead, drying my tears the while, as he used in the old times.

By and by, when I am grown calm, we go out together, into the garden, over the farm. I inspect his stock, hanging lovingly upon his arm, bethinking me of by-gone days, and glad, ah! how heartily glad, for the new-born confidences between us.

He insists on my lunching at his place, and afterward rides

back to Southcote with me. My husband, returning early, persuades him to stay and dine, and the two men go off together to look at some new farm buildings and discuss stock, finally sitting up late to smoke and play billiards.

Is it my fancy, or is Vivian's manner a shade colder to me than usual? I cannot tell if he is aware of my meeting with Wilfred, and dare not be the first to broach the subject.

---

## CHAPTER XLII.

### O RICHARD! O MON ROI!

"Thy husband, thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
Thy head, thy sovereign, one that cares for thee,
And craves no other tribute at thy hands
But love, fair looks, and true obedience;
Too little payment for so great a debt."

So at last after our long coldness Jack and I are reconciled. May I take it as a favorable omen that some day the clouds that lie darkly thick between my husband and myself shall be cleared away, and a new era of happy confidence commenced? It is no longer in my power to deceive myself. I know that any real joy in this life can only come to the love that once I so ungratefully, loathingly spurned.

"Oh! must it always be like this?" I wonder passionately; "are all our best years to be darkened by this bitter estrangement? Will it go on until it becomes a habit that we neither seek nor desire to alter?"

Once I resolve to take some violent measure that will at least chance the dull uncomfortable tenor of our lives, but something always occurs to prevent my carrying the plan into action. Once even I am on the threshold of my husband's room with the words on my lips:

"Love me as you used, or let me go back home again. Anything is better than to live in the same house with this thick wall of ice between us."

But as I turn the handle softly and peep in I see his steward beside him, and a whole roll of accounts on the desk. I run out again quickly with a hot flushed face, and he comes to the door to ask politely if I want something.

"Oh, no," I answer hastily, and run away.

The next time we are alone Lady Cecil has been up at the house, and I have an angry jealous fit upon me.

Sometimes I wonder that he does not see my wistful glances, or that he refuses so stubbornly to interpret them. Once now and then I have seen the old tender look in his eyes, and he has perhaps taken my hand suddenly, or made a step toward me; but then, as if checked by some stronger feeling, has invariably turned away and rushed out of the room.

I am oppressed by an awful, nervous dread of something happening to him out hunting. Sometimes when I do not ride to the meet, I stand on the steps while he mounts, and seeing him look so stalwart and handsome in his pink, I long to throw my arms round his neck, and bid him a loving God-speed. Why

don't I, I wonder, and resolve often enough. And at the time an insurmountable shyness creeps over me, and I feel it impossible.

One gloomy December afternoon, as I sit over the fire in my own boudoir, thinking, I hear the sound of hoofs galloping, and run to the window to see if it is my husband returning. Oh! if it only might be! I have just been resolving to go to him, and tell him how I love him; how wretched the life we now lead is making me. What a golden opportunity if he should only come home alone this dull afternoon! I will bring him in here, and then, perhaps—who knows?

The horse comes in sight—an awful horror rushes across me—it is Vivian's black hunter Amato—riderless! For a moment I stand paralyzed, as he rushes past the window toward the stables, then I dart into the hall to call the men-servants.

"Amato has come home without your master!" I say, trying to command my voice; "go all of you in different directions and see what has happened."

And then opening the hall door, only stopping an instant to throw a lace shawl round my head, I rush out of the house, and down the carriage-drive, never stopping till I get to the lodge gate.

The woman who keeps it is standing out in the lane, looking very white and scared.

"Oh Lord, ma'am!" she says as I come up, "I do hope the master isn't killed, poor gentleman.

I feel almost inclined to strike her for daring to hint at such a thing. If he were killed—O God! I should go mad.

I pass by without a word, and rush wildly down the lane to the turning. No, there is no one in sight, and I tear back to the house to see if there is any news. The servants are running almost in all directions, but no tidings have come as yet. I run back into my room, and falling on my knees send up an agonized prayer for my darling's safety. I don't deceive myself in this awful moment—he is my own, my only love—dearer than ever Wilfred was—the very core of my heart.

"Oh," I mutter, sick with terror, "if he only comes back to me safe this once, there shall be no more coldness, no more distrust, no more misunderstandings. I will go on my knees and confess my love, beseeching him to take me back to his heart."

Then I start to my feet again, and rush down the avenue half a mile into the lane. Yes, there is something that looks like a procession, and I rush on toward it, filled with an awful horror: trembling at what I shall see, but impelled by my maddening anxiety. As I get nearer, I see two men on horseback, and between them four on foot, carrying something on a hurdle.

"He is dead—he is dead!" I moan. Oh, never to the latest moment of my life shall I forget the anguish of that moment. Flying on, I recognize Lord Elsleigh and Mr. Kingscote; as I come up with them, they dismount.

"Is he dead?" I gasp: clinging for a moment to Lord Elsleigh's arm, and then I look at what the men are carrying.

"No, no, no—dead! no—God bless my soul, no—pray be calm,

my dear Mrs. Carruthers—only a bad fall—nothing more, on my word. We have sent for the doctor, and he'll be at Southcote almost as soon as we shall."

Then, as the men pause I get a glimpse of Vivian's face—white, ghastly, rigid, and with a wild shriek I swoon right away.

When I recover, I find myself at the lodge, with Lord Elsleigh standing over me, and the woman applying burnt vinegar to my nostrils.

"Where am I? Lord Elsleigh!" and then as the awful remembrance rushes over me I start to my feet.

"Oh! is he dead?" I cry, piteously. "I must go to him," and I prepare to dart off to the house, only my legs are so weak and trembling.

"Now pray, pray don't be so terrified," says Lord Elsleigh, kindly, "it's only a severe fall. I've had as bad myself. Dr. Samson has gone up to the house—it will be all right."

But I feel that he is deceiving me, and that my husband is dead.

"Take my arm," he insists, and putting my hand through it, I speed along as fast as my tottering limbs will carry me.

At once I make for the room where they have laid him—they would fain keep me out, but I won't be kept away. For four-and-twenty hours Vivian lies insensible, I never leaving him a moment, though I suffer unutterable agony at sight of his blanched ghastly face. They can hardly persuade me that he still lives. I insist on sending for the most eminent physician in the county, and for one from London as well. Papa and Jack come to me at once.

"If he dies," I cry to them, clasping my hands wildly, "I shall go mad."

And they try to comfort me, and tell me that it is concussion of the brain, but he will surely get over it. But I don't, I daren't believe them. Sometimes I pace the room like one distraught, sometimes fling myself on my knees beside him, covering his cold hands with tears and kisses; and when he opens his eyes, I feel half wild with joy.

For days and nights I never leave his bedside, except to snatch an hour's sleep; during all that awful anxious time I neither go to bed, nor permit myself to be undressed. I have often wondered since that my hair did not turn white with the unspeakable anguish of that time, or that some serious illness did not overtake me.

At last he begins slowly to recover; the physicians pronounce him out of danger, and I breathe once more. I am still the constant attendant at his bedside; he takes all his food and medicine from my hand; and though he scarcely speaks yet, he begins to watch me about everywhere with his eyes, and they tell me he is uneasy when I go away even for a moment. I cannot be sure that he is fully sensible of it, but I lavish every caress and endearment upon him, cover his face and hands with kisses, call him by every fond, dear name that love can invent, in my joy at having him back from the jaws of death. Every one is anx-

ious to share in nursing him—his servants perfectly adore him; and my mother and sisters are very good and kind, but I can't bear any one to do anything for him but me, though they try to persuade me that I am killing myself by inches.

"One afternoon, when he is really better, and has just fallen into a quiet sleep, I betake myself down-stairs to his room to look for some papers that the steward wants. Carefully I unlock his desk, thinking mournfully of the last time I saw him sitting there, strong, hale and handsome. Ah! how different from the poor wan invalid I have just left! The first thing that meets my eye is an envelope directed to me in his handwriting. I forget the errand I have come on, forget everything in my eagerness to possess myself of the contents of this letter. It is not sealed, and has evidently been left unfinished; but I take it with trembling hands from the cover, and begin to read:

"MY DARLING,—I have often thought something might happen to carry me off suddenly, a fall out hunting, perhaps, or the accidental discharge of a gun, and there are one or two things I shouldn't like to die without saying to you. And, first of all, if it should so happen, don't reproach yourself with the past; if I have anything to forgive, I forgive it freely, but I don't believe I have. You have always seemed to me the perfection of everything that is pure and good in a woman; and though sometimes things have staggered my faith a little, like seeing you leaning on Wilfred that day here after the race-ball, I am sure if I hadn't been too proud to ask, or even to listen to you, you would have been able to explain it all. I needn't tell you how dearly I have loved you ever since I knew you—you must surely know that, my darling, by this time; and I don't want to make you unhappy by telling you how awfully I've suffered from your coldness and indifference to me. There have been moments, just once now and then, when I have fancied you were coming to care a little bit more for me; and the thought has driven me half wild; but I banished it again resolutely forever after the awful remorse of that day when my eyes were open to see the madness of marrying you, with the knowledge that you did not love me. I swore to myself that until you came and put your arms round me, and told me you loved me, I would never again seek to force my affection upon you. I have almost given up hope now of such a joyful time coming; but——"

Here the writing ends, and I bury my face in my hands, and burst into a flood of tears, part remorseful, part bitter, part happy.

"Oh, my darling!" I murmur—"when you are only strong enough to hear me say it!" for the doctor has strictly forbidden excitement of any kind for him.

The days go on; he progresses slowly and surely. I am biding my time. He can talk to me now, can return my caresses and tell me what a dear, sweet little nurse I am, and how happy he is to have me with him.

When at last he is able to come down-stairs for the first time, my delight knows no bounds. He is carried to the sofa in my

room, and wheeled in front of the bright cheery blaze; and there, as the dusk steals on, we sit happily hand in hand. I am on a stool at his feet, gazing thoughtfully into the fire, for he has been silent some time, and I fancy he has dozed off.

"Doris!" he whispers presently; and looking up I see in the firelight his blue eyes fixed lovingly upon me. "Doris!" and he strokes my hair; while I rest my cheek softly against his hand. "Tell me, my darling," and the voice trembles strangely—"all this love and tenderness you have shown me lately—is it only pity for my weakness and helplessness, or do you—do you really love me a little?"

My time has come now. Kneeling before him, I throw my arms round his neck and whisper, with happy tears in my eyes:

"My own, I love you with all my heart; better than I ever loved Wilfred or any one else in all my life."

"Doris! is it *really* true?" he says eagerly. "I can't believe it; but let me hear you say it again—it sounds so awfully dear and sweet."

I repeat it as he bids me.

"It can't be!" he says, almost fretfully; "you just say it to please me. Why should you just take to loving me now that I am a helpless cripple, when all this long time you've been so cold and indifferent to me? When I am strong again, you will go back to the old feeling—this is only pity."

"Why, darling!" I whisper; "have you never seen all these months how I have been getting to love you, only I did not dare to show it, because I fancied you were changed to me."

"Oh, child, is it really, really true?" he cries, in an eager, broken voice; and then passionately, "Kiss me, if you love me."

I lift my lips to his; and then a long happy silence falls between us, for we know that our love is perfect at last.

[THE END.]

**INDEFATIGABILITY**

marks the women of our households when they undertake to make their homes bright and cheery. Nothing deters them. Their weary work may be as long as the word which begins this paragraph, but they prove their regard for decent homes by their indefatigability. What a pity that any of them should add to their toil by neglecting to use Sapolio. It reduces the labor of cleaning and scouring at least one-half. 10c. a cake. Sold by all grocers.

# SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

(*Solutions Sociales*).

By M. GODIN,

*Founder of the Familistère at Guise; Prominent Leader of Industries in France and Belgium; Member of the National Assembly.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY
MARIE HOWLAND.

**1 vol., 12mo, illustrated, cloth gilt, $1.50.**

An admirable English translation of M. Godin's statement of the course of study which led him to conceive the Social Palace at Guise, France. There is no question that this publication will mark an era in the growth of the labor question. It should serve as the manual for organized labor in its present contest, since its teachings will as surely lead to the destruction of the wages system as the abolition movement lead to that of chattel slavery.

**JOHN W. LOVELL CO., Publishers,**
*14 and 16 Vesey Street,* *NEW YORK.*

**JAMES PYLE'S**

**PEARLINE**

**THE BEST WASHING COMPOUND EVER INVENTED.**

**No Lady, Married or Single, Rich or Poor, Housekeeping or Boarding, will be without it after testing its utility.**

**Sold by all first-class Grocers, but beware of worthless imitations.**

# LOVELL'S LIBRARY.

## COMPLETE CATALOGUE BY AUTHORS.

LOVELL'S LIBRARY now contains the complete writings of most of the best standard authors, such as Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot, Carlyle, Ruskin, Scott, Lytton, Black, etc., etc.

Each number is issued in neat 12mo form, and the type will be found larger, and the paper better, than in any other cheap series published.

**JOHN W. LOVELL COMPANY,**

P. O. Box 1992. **14 and 16 Vesey St., New York.**

### BY G. M. ADAM AND A. E. WETHERALD

846 An Algonquin Maiden.....20

### BY MAX ADELER

295 Random Shots.....20
325 Elbow Room.....20

### BY GUSTAVE AIMARD

560 The Adventurers.....10
567 The Trail-Hunter.....10
[illegible]3 Pearl of the Andes.....10

### BY MRS. ALDERDICE

346 An Interesting Case.....20

### BY MRS. ALEXANDER

62 The Wooing O't, 2 Parts, each.....15
[illegible]9 The Admiral's Ward.....20
209 The Executor.....20
349 Valerie's Fate.....10
664 At Bay.....10
746 Beaton's Bargain.....20
777 A Second Life.....20
799 Maid, Wife, or Widow.....10
840 By Woman's Wit.....20

### BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

419 Fairy Tales.....20

### BY F. ANSTEY

30 Vice Versâ; or, A Lesson to Fathers..20
394 The Giant's Robe.....20
453 Black Poodle, and Other Tales.....20
616 The Tinted Venus.....15
755 A Fallen Idol.....20

### BY EDWIN ARNOLD

486 The Light of Asia.....20
456 Pearls of the Faith.....15
472 Indian Song of Songs.....10

### BY T. S. ARTHUR

496 Woman's Trials.....20
507 The Two Wives.....15
518 Married Life.....15
538 The Ways of Providence.....15
545 Home Scenes.....15
554 Stories for Parents.....15
563 Seed-Time and Harvest.....15
568 Words for the Wise.....15
[illegible]74 Stories for Young Housekeepers....15
579 Lessons in Life.....15
582 Off-Hand Sketches.....15
585 Tried and Tempted.....15

### BY W. E. AYTOUN

351 Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers.....20

### BY ADAM BADEAU

756 Conspiracy.....25

### BY SIR SAMUEL BAKER

206 Cast up by the Sea.....20
227 Rifle and Hound in Ceylon.....20
233 Eight Ye rs' Wandering in Ceylon .20

### BY C W. BALESTIER

381 A Fair Device.....20
405 Life of J. G. Blaine.....20

### BY R. M. BALLANTYNE

215 The Red Eric.....20
226 The Fire Brigade.....20
239 Erling the Bold.....20
241 Deep Down.....20

### BY S. BARING-GOULD

878 Little Tu'penny.....10

### BY GEORGE MIDDLETON BAYNE

460 Galaski.....20

### BY AUGUST BEBEL

712 Woman.....30

### BY MRS. E. BEDELL BENJAMIN

748 Our Roman Palace.....20

### BY A. BENRIMO

470 Vic.....15

### BY W. BERGSOE

77 Pillone.....15

### BY E. BERTHET

366 The Sergeant's Legacy.....20

### BY WALTER BESANT

103 Let Nothing You Dismay.....10
118 They Were Married.....10
257 All in a Garden Fair.....20
268 When the Ship Comes Home.....10
384 Dorothy Forster.....20
699 Self or Bearer.....10
842 The World Went Very Well Then..20
847 The Holy Rose.....10

### BY BJORNSTJERNE BJORNSON

3 The Happy Boy.....10
4 Arne.....10

### BY WILLIAM BLACK

40 An Adventure in Thule, etc.....10
48 A Princess of Thule.....20
82 A Daughter of Heth.....20
35 Shandon Bells.....20
93 Macleod of Dare.....20
136 Yolande.....20
142 Strange Adventures of a Phaeton...20
146 White Wings.....20
153 Sunrise, 2 Parts, each.....15
178 Madcap Violet.....20
180 Kilmeny.....20
182 That Beautiful Wretch.....20
184 Green Pastures, etc.....20
188 In Silk Attire.....20
213 The Three Feathers.....20
216 Lady Silverdale's Sweetheart.....10
217 The Four MacNicols.....10
218 Mr. Pisistratus Brown, M.P.....10
225 Oliver Goldsmith.....10
282 Monarch of Mincing Lane.....20
456 Judith Shakespeare.....20
584 Wise Women of Inverness.....10
678 White Heather.....20

### BY R. D. BLACKMORE

851 Lorna Doone, Part I.....20
851 Lorna Doone, Part II.....20

### BY LILLIE D. BLAKE

105 Woman's Place To-day.....20
597 Fettered for Life.....25

### BY MISS M. E. BRADDON

88 The Golden Calf.....20
104 Lady Audley's Secret.....20
214 Phantom Fortune.....20
266 Under the Red Flag.....10
444 An Ishmaelite.....20
555 Aurora Floyd.....20
588 To the Bitter End.....20
596 Dead Sea Fruit.....20
698 The Mistletoe Bough.....20
766 Vixen.....20
783 The Octoroon.....20
814 Mohawks.....20
868 One Thing Needful.....20
869 Barbara, or Splendid Misery.....20
870 John Marchmont's Legacy.....20
871 Joshua Haggard's Daughter.....20
872 Taken at the Flood.....20
873 Asphodel.....20
877 The Doctor's Wife.....20
878 Only a Clod.....20
879 Sir Jasper's Tenant.....20
880 Lady's Mile.....20
881 Birds of Prey.....20
882 Charlotte's Inheritance.....20
883 Rupert Godwin.....20
886 Strangers and Pilgrims.....20
887 A Strange World.....20
888 Mount Royal.....20
889 Just As I Am.....20
890 Dead Men's Shoes.....20
892 Hostages to Fortune.....20
893 Fenton's Quest.....20
894 The Cloven Foot.....20

### BY ANNIE BRADSHAW

716 A Crimson Stain.....20

### BY CHARLOTTE BREMER

448 Life of Fredrika Bremer.....20

### BY CHARLOTTE BRONTE

74 Jane Eyre.....20

### BY RHODA BROUGHTON

23 Second Thoughts.....20
230 Belinda.....20
781 Betty's Visions.....15
841 Dr. Cupid.....20

### BY ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

421 Aurora Leigh.....20
479 Poems.....35

### BY ROBERT BROWNING

552 Selections from Poetical Works.....20

### BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

443 Poems.....20

### BY ROBERT BUCHANAN

318 The New Abelard.....20
696 The Master of the Mine.....10

### BY JOHN BUNYAN

200 The Pilgrim's Progress.....20

### BY ROBERT BURNS

430 Poems.....20

### BY REV. JAS. S. BUSH

113 More Words about the Bible.....20

### BY E. LASSETER BYNNER

100 Nimport, 2 Parts, each.....15
102 Tritons, 2 Parts, each.....15

### BY THOMAS CAMPBELL

526 Poems.....20

### BY ROSA NOUCHETE CAREY

660 For Lilias.....20

### BY WM. CARLETON

190 Willy Reilly.....20
820 Shane Fadh's Wedding.....10
821 Larry McFarland's Wake.....10
822 The Party Fight and Funeral.....10
823 The Midnight Mass.....10
824 Phil Purcel.....10
825 An Irish Oath.....10
826 Going to Munorth.....10
827 Phelim O'Toole's Courtship.....10
828 Dominick, the Poor Scholar.....10
829 Neal Malone.....10

### BY LEWIS CARROLL

480 Alice's Adventures.....20
481 Through the Looking-Glass.....20

### BY "CAVENDISH"

422 Cavendish Card Essays.....15

### BY CERVANTES

417 Don Quixote.....30

## BY L. W. CHAMPNEY

119 Bourbon Lilies .....20

## BY BERTHA M. CLAY

183 Her Mother's Sin.....20
277 Dora Thorne.....20
287 Beyond Pardon.....20
420 A Broken Wedding-Ring.....20
423 Repented at Leisure .....20
458 Sunshine and Roses.....20
465 The Earl's Atonement.....20
474 A Woman's Temptation.....20
476 Love Works Wonders.....20
558 Fair but False.....10
593 Between Two Sins.....10
651 At War with Herself.....15
669 Hilda.....10
689 Her Martyrdom.....20
692 Lord Lynn's Choice.....10
694 The Shadow of a Sin .....10
695 Wedded and Parted.....10
700 In Cupid's Net .....10
701 Lady Damer's Secret.....20
718 A Gilded Sin .....10
720 Between Two Loves.....20
727 For Another's Sin.....20
730 Romance of a Young Girl.....20
733 A Queen Amongst Women.....10
738 A Golden Dawn.....10
739 Like no Other Love.....10
740 A Bitter Atonement .....20
744 Evelyn's Folly .....20
752 Set in Diamonds.....20
764 A Fair Mystery.....20
800 Thorns and Orange Blossoms.....10
801 Romance of a Black Veil.....10
803 Love's Warfare.....10
804 Madolin's Lover.....20
806 From Out the Gloom.....20
807 Which Loved Him Best.....10
808 A True Magdalen.....20
809 The Sin of a Lifetime.....20
810 Prince Charlie's Daughter.....10
811 A Golden Heart .....10
812 Wife in Name Only.....20
815 A Woman's Error.....

## BY WILKIE COLLINS

8 The Moonstone, Part I.....10
9 The Moonstone, Part II.....10
24 The New Magdalen.....20
87 Heart and Science.....20
418 "I Say No".....20
437 Tales of Two Idle Apprentices.....15
683 The Ghost's Touch.....10
686 My Lady's Money.....10
722 The Evil Genius.....20
839 The Guilty River.....10

## BY HUGH CONWAY

429 Called Back.....15
462 Dark Days .....15
612 Carriston's Gift.....10
617 Paul Vargas; a Mystery.....10
631 A Family Affair.....20
667 Story of a Sculptor.....10
672 Slings and Arrows.....10
715 A Cardinal Sin.....20
745 Living or Dead.....20
750 Somebody's Story.....10

## BY THOMAS CARLYLE

486 History of French Revolution, 2 Parts, each.....25
494 Past and Present.....20
500 The Diamond Necklace; and Mirabeau .....20
503 Chartism.....20
508 Sartor Resartus.....20
514 Early Kings of Norway.....20
520 Jean Paul Friedrich Richter.....10
522 Goethe, and Miscellaneous Essays.....10
525 Life of Heyne.....15
528 Voltaire and Novalis.....15
541 Heroes, and Hero-Worship.....20
546 Signs of the Times .....15
550 German Literature .....15
561 Portraits of John Knox.....15
571 Count Cagliostro, etc .....15
578 Frederick the Great, Vol. I .....20
580 " " " Vol. II.....20
591 " " " Vol. III.....20
610 " " " Vol. IV.....20
617 " " " Vol. V.....20
622 " " " Vol. VI. .....20
626 " " " Vol. VII.....20
628 " " " Vol. VIII.....20
630 Life of John Sterling.....20
633 Latter-Day Pamphlets.....20
636 Life of Schiller.....20
643 Oliver Cromwell, Vol. I.....25
646 " " Vol. II.....25
649 " " Vol. III.....25
652 Characteristics and other Essays... 15
656 Corn Law Rhymes and other Essays.15
658 Baillie the Covenanter and other Essays .....15
661 Dr. Francia and other Essays.....15

## BY J. FENIMORE COOPER

6 The Last of the Mohicans.....20
52 The Spy.....20
365 The Pathfinder.....20
378 Homeward Bound.....20
441 Home as Found.....20
463 The Deerslayer.....30
467 The Prairie.....20
471 The Pioneer.....25
484 The Two Admirals.....20
488 The Water-Witch.....20
491 The Red Rover.....20
501 The Pilot.....20
506 Wing and Wing.....20
512 Wyandotte.....20
517 Heidenmauer.....20
519 The Headsman.....20
524 The Bravo.....20
527 Lionel Lincoln.....20
529 Wept of Wish-ton-Wish.....20
532 Afloat and Ashore.....20
539 Miles Wallingford.....20
543 The Monikins.....20
548 Mercedes of Castile.....20
553 The Sea Lions.....20
559 The Crater.....20
562 Oak Openings.....20
570 Satanstoe.....20
576 The Chain-Bearer.....20
587 Ways of the Hour.....20
601 Precaution.....20
603 Redskins .....25
611 Jack Tier.....20

### BY MRS. ANNIE EDWARDES

381 A Girton Girl.....20

### BY M. BETHAM-EDWARDS

203 Disarmed.....15
663 The Flower of Doom.....10

### BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON

373 Essays.....20

### ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS. EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY

348 Bunyan, by J. A. Froude.....10
407 Burke, by John Morley. .... ..... 10
334 Burns, by Principal Shairp.....10
347 Byron, by Professor Nichol.....10
413 Chaucer, by Prof. A. W. Ward.....10
424 Cowper, by Goldwin Smith.....10
377 Defoe, by William Minto.... .....10
383 Gibbon, by J. C. Morison .....10
225 Goldsmith, by William Black.....10
369 Hume, by Professor Huxley.....10
401 Johnson, by Leslie Stephen.....10
380 Locke, by Thomas Fowler.....10
392 Milton, by Mark Pattison.....10
398 Pope, by Leslie Stephen.... .....10
364 Scott, by R. H. Hutton.....10
361 Shelley, by J. Symonds.....10
404 Southey, by Professor Dowden.....10
431 Spencer, by the Dean of St. Paul's..10
344 Thackeray, by Anthony Trollope...10
410 Wordsworth, by F. Myers.....10

### BY B. L. FARJEON

243 Gautran; or, House of White Shadows.....20
654 Love's Harvest.....20
856 Golden Bells .....10
874 Nine of Hearts .....20

### BY HARRIET FARLEY

473 Christmas Stories.....20

### BY F. W. FARRAR, D.D.

19 Seekers after God.....20
50 Early Days of Christianity, 2 Parts, each .....20

### BY OCTAVE FEUILLET

41 A Marriage in High Life.....20

### BY MRS. FORRESTER

760 Fair Women .....20
818 Once Again.....20
843 My Lord and My Lady.....20
844 Dolores .....20
850 My Hero .....20
859 Viva .....20
860 Omnia Vanitas .....10
861 Diana Carew.....20
862 From Olympus to Hades.....20
863 Rhona .....20
864 Roy and Viola.....20
865 June.....20
866 Mignon .....20
867 A Young Man's Fancy .....20

### BY FRIEDRICH, BARON DE LA MOTTE FOUQUE

711 Undine .....10

### BY THOMAS FOWLER

380 Life of Locke.....10

### BY FRANCESCA

177 The Story of Ida.....10

### BY R. E. FRANCILLON

319 A Real Queen .....20
856 Golden Bells .....10

### BY ALBERT FRANKLYN

122 Ameline de Bourg.....15

### BY L. VIRGINIA FRENCH

485 My Roses.....20

### BY J. A. FROUDE

348 Life of Bunyan.....10

### BY EMILE GABORIAU

114 Monsieur Lecoq, 2 Parts, each.....20
116 The Lerouge Case .....20
120 Other People's Money.....20
129 In Peril of His Life.....20
138 The Gilded Clique.....20
155 Mystery of Orcival .....20
161 Promise of Marriage.....10
258 File No. 113.....20

### BY HENRY GEORGE

52 Progress and Poverty.....20
390 The Land Question.....10
393 Social Problems..... .....20
796 Property in Land.....15

### BY CHARLES GIBBON

57 The Golden Shaft.....20

### BY J. W. VON GOETHE

342 Goethe's Faust.... .....20
343 Goethe's Poems.....20

### BY OLIVER GOLDSMITH

51 Vicar of Wakefield.....10
362 Plays and Poems.....20

### BY MRS. GORE

89 The Dean's Daughter.....20

### BY JAMES GRANT

49 The Secret Despatch.....20

### BY CECIL GRIFFITH

732 Victory Deane.....20

### BY ARTHUR GRIFFITHS

709 No. 99..... .....10

### THE BROTHERS GRIMM

221 Fairy Tales, Illustrated..... 20

### BY LIEUT. J. W. GUNNISON

440 History of the Mormons .....15

### BY MARION HARLAND

107 Housekeeping and Homemaking....15

### BY ERNST HAECKEL

97 India and Ceylon.....20

### BY F. W. MACKLANDER

606 Forbidden Fruit ..... 20

### BY H. RIDER HAGGARD

813 King Solomon's Mines ..... 20
848 She ..... 20
876 The Witch's Head ..... 20

### BY A. EGMONT HAKE

871 The Story of Chinese Gordon ..... 20

### BY LUDOVIC HALEVY

15 L'Abbé Constantin ..... 20

### BY THOMAS HARDY

43 Two on a Tower ..... 20
157 Romantic Adventures of a Milk-maid ..... 10
749 The Mayor of Casterbridge ..... 20

### BY JOHN HARRISON AND M. COMPTON

414 Over the Summer Sea ..... 20

### BY J. B. HARWOOD

269 One False, both Fair ..... 20

### BY JOSEPH HATTON

7 Clytie ..... 20
137 Cruel London ..... 20

### BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

370 Twice Told Tales ..... 20
376 Grandfather's Chair ..... 20

### BY MARY CECIL HAY

466 Under the Will ..... 10
566 The Arundel Motto ..... 20
590 Old Myddleton's Money ..... 20
787 A Wicked Girl ..... 10

### BY MRS. FELICIA HEMANS

583 Poems ..... 30

### BY DAVID J. HILL, LL.D.

533 Principles and Fallacies of Socialism ..... 15

### BY M. L. HOLBROOK, M.D.

356 Hygiene of the Brain ..... 25

### BY MRS. M. A. HOLMES

709 Woman against Woman ..... 20
743 A Woman's Vengeance ..... 20

### BY PAXTON HOOD

73 Life of Cromwell ..... 15

### BY THOMAS HOOD

511 Poems ..... 30

### BY HORRY AND WEEMS

36 Life of Marion ..... 20

### BY ROBERT HOUDIN

14 The Tricks of the Greeks ..... 20

### BY EDWARD HOWLAND

742 Social Solutions, Part I ..... 10
747 " " Part II ..... 10
758 " " Part III ..... 10
762 " " Part IV ..... 10
765 " " Part V ..... 10
774 " " Part VI ..... 10
778 " " Part VII ..... 10
782 " " Part VIII ..... 10
785 " " Part IX ..... 10
788 " " Part X ..... 10
791 " " Part XI ..... 10
795 " " Part XII ..... 10

### BY MARIE HOWLAND

534 Papa's Own Girl ..... 30

### BY JOHN W. HOYT, LL.D.

535 Studies in Civil Service ..... 15

### BY THOMAS HUGHES

61 Tom Brown's School Days ..... 20
186 Tom Brown at Oxford, 2 Parts, each 15

### BY PROF. HUXLEY

369 Life of Hume ..... 10

### BY STANLEY HUNTLEY

109 The Spoopendyke Papers ..... 20

### BY VICTOR HUGO

784 Les Miserables, Part I ..... 20
784 " " Part II ..... 20
784 " " Part III ..... 20

### BY R. H. HUTTON

364 Life of Scott ..... 20

### BY WASHINGTON IRVING

147 The Sketch Book ..... 20
198 Tales of a Traveller ..... 20
199 Life and Voyages of Columbus, Part I ..... 20
Life and Voyages of Columbus, Part II ..... 20
224 Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey ... 10
236 Knickerbocker History of New York, 20
249 The Crayon Papers ..... 20
263 The Alhambra ..... 15
272 Conquest of Granada ..... 20
279 Conquest of Spain ..... 10
281 Bracebridge Hall ..... 20
290 Salmagundi ..... 20
299 Astoria ..... 20
301 Spanish Voyages ..... 20
305 A Tour on the Prairies ..... 10
308 Life of Mahomet, 2 Parts, each .... 15
310 Oliver Goldsmith ..... 20
311 Captain Bonneville ..... 20
314 Moorish Chronicles ..... 10
321 Wolfert's Roost and Miscellanies .... 10

### BY HARRIET JAY

17 The Dark Colleen ..... 20

### BY SAMUEL JOHNSON

44 Rasselas ..... 10

### BY MAURICE JOKAI

754 A Modern Midas ..... 20

### BY JOHN KEATS

[illegible] Poems ..... 25

The treatment of many thousands of cases of those chronic weaknesses and distressing ailments peculiar to females, at the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, Buffalo, N. Y., has afforded a vast experience in nicely adapting and thoroughly testing remedies for the cure of woman's peculiar maladies.

**Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription** is the outgrowth, or result, of this great and valuable experience. Thousands of testimonials received from patients and from physicians who have tested it in the more aggravated and obstinate cases which had baffled their skill, prove it to be the most wonderful remedy ever devised for the relief and cure of suffering women. It is not recommended as a "cure-all," but as a most perfect Specific for woman's peculiar ailments.

**As a powerful, invigorating tonic** it imparts strength to the whole system, and to the uterus, or womb and its appendages, in particular. For overworked, "worn-out," "run-down," debilitated teachers, milliners, dressmakers, seamstresses, "shop-girls," housekeepers, nursing mothers, and feeble women generally, Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is the greatest earthly boon, being unequalled as an appetizing cordial and restorative tonic. It promotes digestion and assimilation of food, cures nausea, weakness of stomach, indigestion, bloating and eructations of gas.

**As a soothing and strengthening nervine,** "Favorite Prescription" is unequalled and is invaluable in allaying and subduing nervous excitability, irritability, exhaustion, prostration, hysteria, spasms and other distressing, nervous symptoms commonly attendant upon functional and organic disease of the womb. It induces refreshing sleep and relieves mental anxiety and despondency.

**Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is a legitimate medicine,** carefully compounded by an experienced and skillful physician, and adapted to woman's delicate organization. It is purely vegetable in its composition and perfectly harmless in its effects in any condition of the system.

**"Favorite Prescription" is a positive cure** for the most complicated and obstinate cases of leucorrhea, or "whites," excessive flowing at monthly periods, painful menstruation, unnatural suppressions, prolapsus or falling of the womb, weak back, "female weakness," anteversion, retroversion, bearing-down sensations, chronic congestion, inflammation and ulceration of the womb inflammation, pain and tenderness in ovaries, accompanied with internal heat

**In pregnancy,** "Favorite Prescription" is a "mother's cordial," relieving nausea, weakness of stomach and other distressing symptoms common to that condition. If its use is kept up in the latter months of gestation, it so prepares the system for delivery as to greatly lessen, and many times almost entirely do away with the sufferings of that trying ordeal.

**"Favorite Prescription,"** when taken in connection with the use of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, and small laxative doses of Dr. Pierce's Purgative Pellets (Little Liver Pills), cures Liver, Kidney and Bladder diseases. Their combined use also removes blood taints, and abolishes cancerous and scrofulous humors from the system.

**Treating the Wrong Disease.**—Many times women call on their family physicians, suffering, as they imagine, one from dyspepsia, another from heart disease, another from liver or kidney disease, another from nervous exhaustion or prostration, another with pain here or there, and in this way they all present alike to themselves and their easy-going and indifferent, or over-busy doctor, separate and distinct diseases, for which he prescribes his pills and potions, assuming them to be such, when, in reality, they are all only *symptoms* caused by some womb disorder. The physician, ignorant of the cause of suffering, encourages his practice until large bills are made. The suffering patient gets no better, but probably worse by reason of the delay, wrong treatment and consequent complications. A proper medicine, like Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, *directed to the cause* would have entirely removed the disease, thereby dispelling all those distressing symptoms, and instituting comfort instead of prolonged misery.

**"Favorite Prescription"** is the only medicine for women sold, by druggists, **under a positive guarantee,** from the manufacturers, that it will give satisfaction in every case, or money will be refunded. This guarantee has been printed on the bottle-wrapper, and faithfully carried out for many years. **Large bottles** (100 doses) **$1.00, or six bottles for $5.00.**

☞ Send ten cents in stamps for Dr. Pierce's large, illustrated Treatise (160 pages) on Diseases of Women. Address,

World's Dispensary Medical Association,
No. 663 Main Street, *Buffalo, N. Y.*

# PEARS' SOAP

## A SPECIALTY FOR INFANTS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

00022291737